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Security Council

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Friday, 7 August 2009, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Sir John Sawers	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Guillermet
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Japan	Mr. Okuda
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	Turkey	Mr. Çorman
	Uganda	Mr. Mugoya
	United States of America	Ms. Rice
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) (S/2009/362)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Women and peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) (S/2009/362)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cape Verde, Ecuador, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste and the United Republic of Tanzania, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of members of the Council to document S/2009/362, which contains the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1820 (2008).

I should like to start by welcoming the Secretary-General, who joins us today to present his first follow-up report to resolution 1820 (2008) on women, peace and security.

In addition, I should like to extend our welcome and thanks to three female United Nations police officers from United Nations missions in Liberia, Haiti and the Sudan, who are here to observe our debate. Yesterday, they attended a round-table event at the United Nations that was sponsored by the Canadian Mission and the Pearson Peacekeeping Training Centre. It is important that we have opportunities in New York to hear from field practitioners dealing with those difficult issues.

Resolution 1820 (2008) builds upon resolution 1325 (2000). It confirms the Council's readiness to address more systematically the scourge of conflict-related sexual violence. It also underlines the vital contribution that women themselves can make as peacekeepers and peacebuilders.

Our objective today is to hear the views of colleagues from across the United Nations membership to aid Council consideration of the way forward in the light of the Secretary-General's report.

I now invite the Secretary-General to take the floor.

The Secretary-General: I commend your initiative, Mr. President, to convene this Security Council debate on one of the important priorities of the United Nations: women, peace and security.

Despite some progress over two decades, the deliberate targeting of civilians through acts of sexual violence continues on a widespread and systematic basis. Parties to armed conflict continue to use sexual violence with efficient brutality. Like a grenade or a gun, sexual violence is part of their arsenal to pursue military, political, social and economic aims. The perpetrators generally operate with impunity.

I have met victims of sexual violence. I am haunted by their testimony, and I will not relent in calling on States and non-State parties to prevent those terrible crimes. Beyond its enormous toll on victims, sexual violence in armed conflict hurts recovery and peacebuilding. In Burundi, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the fighting may have ended but sexual violence persists on a very serious scale. We are helping those countries to recover, but we must also do more to prevent others from suffering the same fate.

My report (S/2009/362) highlights where States and other parties must act. I also call on the Security Council to focus on concrete actions. Allow me to briefly underscore four areas.

First, preventing and responding to sexual violence requires a multisectoral response, the pillars of which are interdependent. The efforts of the United Nations system reach across our main work areas from the normative to the operational. I am committed to strengthening the United Nations system to ensure that we deliver as one.

Secondly, sexual violence should be addressed from the planning to the implementation of mandates. Our actions must be focused and sustained over time to achieve results, as the causes and consequences of sexual violence are often intractable. I am pleased that the issue will be included in the terms of reference for technical assessment missions and the integrated mission planning process. Peacekeeping missions and United Nations country teams will establish joint priorities in that regard through integrated strategic frameworks.

I am also working with my top advisers to ensure that the United Nations gives priority attention to preventing and responding to sexual violence. Yesterday, in my meeting with force commanders, I gave a clear and strong instruction that military leaders should keep that issue as the top priority in working to maintain peace and security. I call on Council members and other States, as well as civilian and military leaders, to join forces to address that grave problem. I repeat: No act of sexual exploitation and abuse by any United Nations personnel will be tolerated.

Thirdly, I urge the General Assembly to conclude its deliberations on the creation of a United Nations institution to advance gender equality and women's human rights. I am also in discussions with the United Nations system partners on appointing a new senior system-wide official to address sexual violence. I am considering that in the light of the General Assembly's discussions and existing mechanisms, such as the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict. I am also studying the additional costs that this would entail.

Fourthly, we must improve monitoring, investigation and documentation to address the many challenges that we face in gathering information and reporting on sexual violence. We will also continue to promote a greater understanding of resolution 1820 (2008) in all United Nations missions and duty stations and to adapt our approaches and systems, including for monitoring and reporting, to support its effective implementation.

The recommendations in my report are mutually reinforcing. If they are carried out together, we can foster greater progress. Those recommendations are also designed to provide the Council with more consistent, evidence-based and timely information to help it in addressing that challenge.

Towards that end, I urge the Council to immediately authorize the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry, supported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. It would be tasked with investigating and reporting on violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in ongoing conflict situations in Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan. That independent commission of inquiry should recommend to the Council the most effective mechanisms to ensure accountability for those egregious crimes.

I also draw the Council's attention to the brutal, predatory and deliberate targeting of civilians by the Lord's Resistance Army, whose activities have destabilized civilians in the Sudan, the Central African Republic, Uganda and the Democratic People's Republic of the Congo.

I am prepared to submit an annual report on resolution 1820 (2008). I want to help ensure that all parties respect their obligations under international law and are held accountable when they violate them. Victims of sexual violence are among the world's most vulnerable and traumatized people. For the sake of these innocent women and men, their families and their societies, we must come together and act. That will help victims in war-torn countries and set us on a course for a better world.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement and for his leadership on this issue.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Security Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes, in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I shall now give the floor to members of the Security Council.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): Mr. President, I want to begin by thanking you and your delegation for hosting this very important event and for ensuring that it remains front and centre on the Council's agenda. I also want to thank the Secretary-General very much for his important report (S/2009/362) and his very helpful recommendations, as well as for his presence here today.

Throughout history, sexual violence has often occurred in places racked by armed conflict. But over the past decade, reporting from several countries has confirmed that rape is becoming increasingly frequent and brutal, and in some places a systematic weapon of war. In response, the Security Council has adopted resolution 1820 (2008), repeatedly condemned these crimes and called on all parties to immediately end acts of rape and sexual violence during armed conflicts.

But thousands of women and girls are still being gang-raped, mutilated, assaulted and forced into sexual slavery every single day. This we must end. I will never forget when we took our trip to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and met with two very eloquent victims of rape and sexual violence at the Heal Africa Hospital. They spoke movingly of the horrible, horrible crimes they had experienced. After our discussion, I had the opportunity briefly to speak privately with the older of those two women. She pulled me aside, I think looking to me as the one woman on the Security Council at present. She asked me, with tears in her eyes, to do everything I could, and that we could, to end this horrible systematic violence that she and so many others had experienced. I gave her my word that I would, and, with the cooperation and support of my fellow Council members, I intend to keep my word.

This is because sexual assaults against women are often committed in front of their husbands and children, and they do more than inflict appalling physical, mental and emotional injuries on their victims. They can also spread HIV/AIDS and other diseases, produce unwanted children who become neglected or orphans and undermine families and communities when the survivors are stigmatized and shamed. All too often, the result is a smouldering anger and an insatiable desire for revenge that only worsens the violence and makes peace agreements all the harder to reach or sustain.

We must end these atrocities. We must better protect women and girls, halt the impunity that perpetrators enjoy and make it easier to achieve lasting and inclusive peace. To succeed, we need to ensure that rapists and other perpetrators of sexual violence are identified and punished. We need sustained efforts to prevent new acts of sexual violence, including by increasing human rights training and vetting for members of domestic security forces. We also need quality and accessible treatment for survivors of rape and abuse.

At the same time, we need to collect more data on sexual violence, share United Nations reporting more widely and bring that information into the Security Council in real time. The Secretary-General's report includes several recommendations that could dramatically improve current practice. Building on resolution 1820 (2008), the United States urges the Council to consider these recommendations seriously and to act swiftly on them.

Job one is to hold perpetrators accountable, and so the United States supports credible domestic or hybrid and international accountability mechanisms that investigate and prosecute these crimes, particularly in countries incapable of bringing such criminals to effective justice. We aim to build State capacity to enforce the rule of law through a range of measures, from technical assistance through training by international lawyers to assistance in drafting legislation.

In this regard, I would like to say a few words specifically about the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the interlinked problems of sexual violence and impunity are particularly grave. According to the United Nations Population Fund, nearly 16,000 new cases of sexual violence were registered throughout the country in 2008, with 65 per cent of those cases involving children. Yet data collected from provincial health centres between 2005 and 2007 suggest that Congolese courts heard only 2 per cent of the registered rape cases in the conflict-ridden eastern Congo.

Some cases against accused Congolese perpetrators of mass atrocities are pending in the International Criminal Court, but we should establish other mechanisms for ensuring accountability and bringing perpetrators to justice. A commission of inquiry, as suggested by the Secretary-General, is one option that deserves serious consideration. The Council

should also explore deployment of technical assistance teams to develop the capacity to combat sexual violence in all conflict zones. These teams could determine the feasibility of establishing a dedicated chamber in domestic courts that would prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity, with a substantial focus on sexual and gender-based violence.

We welcome the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's recently announced zero-tolerance policy for members of its security forces who commit sexual violence. We also welcome the April 2009 launch of a comprehensive strategy by the United Nations and the Congolese Government for combating gender-based violence. And we will continue to insist on the complete resolution of the five cases discussed by the Council earlier this week. We welcome the efforts of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the recent approval of a six-officer sexual violence unit to help the Mission implement its protection mandate, and we encourage MONUC to work further with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on this immense problem. And we will work with the Congolese and all stakeholders to help craft more effective solutions.

Next, we need specialized leadership and high-level attention at the United Nations, to focus on implementing the goals of resolution 1820 (2008). The United States believes that the appointment of a high-level special representative on women and peace and security by the Secretary-General for a specified period of time would help focus the Secretariat's efforts. This time-limited mandate would be to review and streamline multisectoral responses to sexual violence in conflict situations, promote integrated and coordinated approaches, bolster the role of women in peace negotiations and peacekeeping operations, and promote accountability for the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008).

Thirdly, we should use targeted measures to thwart sexual violence as a tactic of war. We fully support the report's recommendations on incorporating provisions on sexual violence in armed conflict into existing sanctions regimes, as appropriate. To best apply such targeted measures and give the Council the up-to-date information it needs, information-sharing among all Council-mandated bodies is essential. The Secretary-General's relevant Special Representatives and emergency relief coordinators should work with Member States to develop comprehensive, joint Government-United Nations strategies for combating sexual violence, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. They should also provide regular updates on sexual violence in their reporting to the Secretary-General and the Security Council.

Fourthly, to curb rape and sexual violence by military officers, we must create a culture of awareness and accountability within national militaries, starting with the top commanders and marching all the way down the chain of command. Neither soldiers nor officers should be able to commit sexual violence, especially with impunity. Perpetrators must not be promoted. We must work to build up effective vetting mechanisms that will exclude persons who face credible allegations and evidence of crimes.

We in the international community need to explore ways to foster such a culture of accountability through better training, capacity-building and other targeted programmes. And the United Nations needs to lead by example, by actively enforcing the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeepers. Simply put, abusers cannot be allowed to serve in United Nations peacekeeping missions, now or in the future.

Efforts to combat sexual violence must also be placed squarely on the political agenda when countries are searching for lasting stability and peace. The United Nations and its Member States and future mediators should address sexual violence in today's peace processes and include them from the very start in future peace talks. In addition, we must include more women as mediators and members of negotiating teams.

During last year's open debate on sexual violence (see S/PV.5916), the former Division Commander of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) warned against the troubling dynamic of men with guns forgiving other men with guns for crimes committed against women. If peace processes are to succeed and endure, they must avoid this pitfall.

Finally, reporting by the Secretary-General on sexual violence in conflict zones is critically important to all these efforts, and we endorse the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend a standing invitation to the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur on violence against

women and the Chairperson of the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict to provide additional briefings on sexual violence and to supplement the information received from the Special Representatives and the emergency relief coordinators as the situation arises. We also want continued annual reporting on this topic by the Secretary-General and we welcome his commitment to provide it.

Beyond the measures that the Security Council can take, important aspects of the problem of sexual violence must be pursued in other bodies, including in the General Assembly's discussion of a new gender architecture. We will work with other stakeholders within the United Nations system and non-government organizations to end impunity and assist the victims of rape and sexual assault.

We have a great deal to do to fully implement resolution 1820 (2008). Putting this topic on the world's agenda was an important step forward, but it was just a first step. We now look forward to working with our fellow Council members, the Secretariat and other partners to bring a halt to and prevent further sexual violence in armed conflict once and for all. The task is massive, and the time is now.

Mr. Çorman (Turkey): I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing and for his presence among us today. We are also thankful for his detailed report (S/2009/362).

A great number of the casualties in armed conflicts continue to be civilians, and that number is constantly increasing. We have been witnessing serious challenges in securing a safe environment for women in many parts of the world. Within this context, sexual violence, particularly against women and children, are also on the rise. We condemn in the strongest possible terms all deliberate attacks on civilians, including women and children, as well as any kind of sexual violence used as a tool of war in armed conflict.

It is within that framework that we welcome the Secretary-General's report, which gives us a comprehensive account of the most recent situation in various theatres and the difficulties that are being encountered. The report shows the huge task we are facing. We should make a collective effort to prevent sexual violence against women, with the primary obligation and responsibility resting first and foremost with States.

The Secretary-General's report puts forward useful recommendations. They are pertinent, detailed and well crafted, and we support all of them in principle. However, we also believe that any issue related to the protection of civilians, including women and children, should be handled carefully, since these are all sensitive cases. In this vein, I wish to make four preliminary observations.

First, we agree with the necessity of the Security Council taking a fresh look at the protection of civilians, in particular women and children. A few days ago, here in this Chamber, we adopted resolution 1882 (2009) to protect children in armed conflict in a comprehensive manner. We believe that that resolution was the right step in the right direction. However, when establishing new mechanisms we should also be careful: creating a plethora of institutions carries the risk of causing duplication. As the Secretary-General rightly pointed out in his report, the United Nations should deliver as one to prevent and respond to sexual violence. Therefore, taking into account the system-wide coherence process, we should first efficiently use to their fullest extent, and perhaps sharpen, existing tools and mechanisms, including all the avenues and special procedures of the Human Rights Council–and the machinery of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Secondly, as rightly indicated in the Secretary-General's report, data needs to be more systematically collected, preserved and analysed. However, we are also aware of the difficulties that United Nations actors and non-governmental organization workers are confronting while collecting data.

Thirdly, we believe that another important issue is the situation of camps for refugees and internally displaced persons. Protection of the civilian nature of those camps is vital. The United Nations and the host countries are responsible for the preservation of their civilian status. Violation of that status, either by outsiders or by insiders who bear arms, will only jeopardize vulnerable persons in those camps, in particular women, who could face the most heinous crimes.

Fourthly, we must prevent sexual violence, fight impunity and address the issue of discrimination against women, both in legislation and in practice. This effort should be accompanied by assistance to victims. We should also look into enhancing the possible role of

peacekeeping forces in the prevention of these unacceptable crimes.

Finally, I would stress that it is only through the strengthening of the rule of law, enhanced political participation, human rights, democracy and good governance that we can secure the long-term and lasting protection of women. As a party to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women since 1985 and having ratified the Convention's Optional Protocol in 2002, my Government believes that it should be our priority to encourage all nations to adhere to the principles of those international documents. We also support the Global Campaign to end violence against women initiated by the Secretary-General at the opening of the fifty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women in February 2008.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that Turkey is ready to participate in and positively contribute to every effort to eliminate sexual violence and discrimination against women.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank the United Kingdom for having taken the initiative of holding this ninth open debate on women and peace and security. I would also like to welcome the Secretary-General here today and to thank him for the presentation of his first report on implementation of resolution 1820 (2008). More broadly, we welcome his determined commitment to this issue. My delegation, of course, completely supports the statement that will be made by the Permanent Representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union.

The Secretary-General's assessment of sexual violence is, unfortunately, definitive. Sexual violence is widespread and often systematic, and is sometimes even used as a weapon of war in several regions and in many situations on the Council's agenda. The United Nations has a special and critical role to play in responding to this phenomenon. In many instances, it has specific tools to assist national authorities in supporting the victims of sexual violence, prosecuting and trying suspects, and arresting those who are guilty of such crimes. The Organization also has the responsibility to encourage relevant authorities to act to that end.

At the initiative of France, the fight against sexual violence was a high priority of the Security Council's annual visit to Africa in May. Because we believe in the value of deterrence in the struggle against impunity, we argued with the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for five officers accused of perpetrating sexual violence to be brought to justice. Earlier this week, the Council noted with satisfaction that judicial procedures had been launched against those individuals and that they had been removed from their command duties. That is an important message in the fight against sexual violence and impunity. The United Nations and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo played an important role in achieving that outcome. The Council will continue to monitor the matter closely.

France also welcomes the significant institutional progress that was achieved two days ago with the adoption of resolution 1882 (2009), which, inter alia, extends the reporting and monitoring mechanism of resolution 1612 (2005) to sexual violence committed against children, regardless of whether or not child soldiers are involved. The extension will allow the Security Council and the international community to focus greater attention and response on this widespread phenomenon, which targets girls in particular.

In his report (S/2009/362), the Secretary-General notes that many interesting initiatives have been undertaken to address the gravity of the situation. We must strengthen those initiatives and ensure the dissemination of good practices. The role of peacekeeping operations is essential in that respect, and I welcome the presence here of female police officers deployed in those operations. To the extent possible and necessary, peacekeeping operations must develop ambitious strategies to address sexual violence. They must engage in dialogue with the parties to armed conflicts, and their components — primarily gender and human rights advisers, as well as special representatives of the Secretary-General — must take every opportunity to make the parties aware of their obligations in this area and to encourage them to change their behaviour. We hope that the parties' response to the issue, or lack thereof, will be reflected in the Secretary-General's next report so that we can be better informed and assess to the best of our ability the international community's action and progress with respect to the scourge.

France welcomes the work undertaken by the sanctions committees on the matter under consideration

today. Pursuant to the commitment it made in resolution 1820 (2008), the Security Council must systematically consider the relevance of including sexual violence among the triggers of sanctions during the establishment or revision of the committees' mandates. When the criteria are met, it will be up to the committees' experts to raise the matter.

In that regard, we recall the role of France, alongside the United Kingdom, Belgium and the United States, in the inclusion by the sanctions committee on the Democratic Republic of the Congo of the names of four members of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda on the list of those targeted for individual sanctions.

France welcomes the set of recommendations proposed by the Secretary-General to strengthen our action against sexual violence. We are ready to play an active role in any initiative to promote Security Council action on those recommendations as soon as possible. For our part, we believe that the implementation of the following proposals, referred to by the Secretary-General in his statement, is of special importance.

First, the Secretary-General should submit to the Council an annual report on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008). We invite him to formulate proposals on the modalities for the Security Council's consideration of measures taken by parties to a conflict to meet their obligations, including in the fight against impunity, and its identification of appropriate steps in response.

Secondly, a commission of inquiry should be established. France endorses the concept of creating a commission to investigate and advocate the most effective mechanisms for prosecuting those who commit sexual violence. The commission's competence should be limited to sexual violence, and its work coordinated with peacekeeping operations mandated to counter sexual violence. In that respect, we would be interested to learn more about the criteria that led the Secretary-General to propose that we focus initially on three geographical situations. We are ready to discuss that and should like the Secretariat to explain how it foresees extending that mechanism in its future phases.

The third and last proposal that I wish to highlight is that of appointing an official to lead the fight against sexual violence throughout the entire United Nations system. We strongly endorse that proposal.

In conclusion, I reiterate France's full commitment to fighting sexual violence against women. The Council can rest assured of our full commitment to that issue within the Security Council in the months to come and of our resolve to pursue our efforts to strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention and settlement and in rebuilding peace in the context of the follow-up to resolution 1325 (2000), which we will be discussing shortly and concerning which there remains a great deal to be done.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (Austria): I would first like to thank you, Sir, and the United Kingdom presidency for organizing this debate. I would also like to welcome the Secretary-General. Austria applauds him for his unwavering commitment in the fight against all forms of violence against women.

The adoption of resolution 1820 (2008) a year ago was an historical event. The resolution clearly states that sexual violence against women in armed conflict can constitute a threat to international peace and security that requires the attention of the Security Council. Despite positive and successful steps undertaken by the United Nations and individual States, women continue to fall victim to sexual violence used as a deliberate means of warfare. This takes place on a daily basis in conflict situations around the world.

Austria aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union, as well as with that to be made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Human Security Network. I would like to concentrate on a number of practical proposals on how the Council could further improve its action on this important matter.

Systematic attention needs to be paid to the prevention of and protection from sexual violence in the daily deliberations of the Council. We welcome the recent adoption of resolution 1882 (2009), extending the scope of the monitoring and reporting mechanism to parties who perpetrate grave sexual violence against children in situations of armed conflict. As women and girls represent the majority of victims of sexual violence, there is a need to ensure that reporting is not strictly limited to victims under the age of 18. In this context, we would welcome further information in a

follow-up report next year on an appropriate monitoring and accountability mechanism to be established by the Council.

Austria also welcomes the work of the Council's informal Expert Group on the Protection of Civilians, which we see as a useful forum for discussing important protection concerns, including those in the fight against sexual violence.

More consistent and comprehensive reporting on sexual violence in the Secretary-General's country-specific reports would enable the Council to address the protection of civilians, particularly women and children, from sexual violence in a more systematic manner. To this end, the Council should include specific reporting requirements in resolutions establishing or renewing mandates.

Briefings by the Secretary-General's special representatives, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and relevant rapporteurs will and can also provide the Council with information crucial to its work.

We are fully aware of the sensitivities of collecting data from victims of sexual violence, who are often severely traumatized by the dramatic experiences they have gone through. Guidelines on information gathering must take ethical and safety concerns into account. Short- and long-term assistance for survivors of sexual violence, in particular accessible and quality health care, psychosocial support and legal advice should be a priority.

Let me also acknowledge the vital role that non-governmental organizations and humanitarian organizations play in this regard. Access constraints for humanitarian actors can severely affect the situation of victims of sexual violence.

Today, a clear body of rules outlawing sexual violence, including in armed conflict, is contained in international human rights, humanitarian and international criminal law. In spite of this, perpetrators who systematically commit serious violations against women and girls still go largely unpunished. Allegations of sexual violence need to be thoroughly investigated and perpetrators need to be brought to account, including not only through prosecution, but also through the vetting of armed and security forces.

This situation demands further action by the Security Council to strengthen the rule of law and to end impunity. Where necessary, the Council should consider appropriate measures encouraging and ensuring accountability for those responsible for international crimes, including through the establishment of commissions of inquiry, referrals to the International Criminal Court and the imposition of targeted measures. Sanctions committees need to receive relevant information to this end, including through exchanges with other subsidiary bodies.

The Council took an important step when deciding to give priority to the protection of civilians in the mandate of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). This led to the subsequent adoption of the Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, endorsed by the Government.

It is also a very important and positive development that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has now finally decided to take concrete measures in the five particularly dramatic cases to which the Council once again drew the attention of that country's authorities during its mission there. It is evidently necessary that the Council continue to follow up on this matter.

We are encouraged by the valuable work of MONUC's new joint protection teams. We must draw on lessons learned by such best practices in order to transpose them to the contexts of other missions. That is certainly an issue with which we will have to deal when we consider, in general terms, the subject of the protection of civilians in peacekeeping.

The active contribution of women to peacebuilding and conflict prevention is crucial to achieving lasting peace. Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) have underlined the need to include women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding measures. Further efforts are needed. The development of gender guidelines for military personnel by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the development of guidelines for mediators and their consistent implementation can contribute to improving our response to sexual violence in conflict settings.

In order to effectively fight sexual violence, improved coordination throughout the system, as well as leadership and accountability, are needed. Austria fully supports the appointment of a senior person with responsibility to attend to the prevention of and

response to sexual violence across the entire United Nations system.

Austria is grateful for the Secretary-General's willingness to provide the Council with annual reports on this very important matter, and we look forward to receiving them in the interest of enhancing the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008).

Mr. Okuda (Japan): I thank you, Mr. President, for presiding over today's important debate on sexual violence in armed conflict.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for personally presenting his first report (S/2009/362) pursuant to resolution 1820 (2008). We also commend the invaluable efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to collect the information and insights from many stakeholders that made this report possible.

The unanimous adoption of resolution 1820 (2008) by the Security Council last year was a milestone because, through the agency of the Council, the international community recognized that sexual violence committed amidst armed conflict is a security issue. Such violence, when used as a strategy for waging war, not only causes physical and psychological damage to the victims, but also significantly sets back any momentum that may have been generated towards achieving peace and security.

In the year that has passed since the resolution was adopted, it is clear that some progress has been made in protecting civilians from sexual violence. As mentioned in the report, United Nations peacekeeping missions have strengthened their mandates to provide effective protection, including in response to sexual violence. The Peacebuilding Commission has also been active in addressing this issue, and civil society has enhanced its advocacy activities.

Japan is also pleased that, by unanimously adopting resolution 1882 (2009), the Council has now strengthened its responses to rape and other sexual violence against children in armed conflict. The implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) nevertheless faces many challenges. We are deeply concerned, for example, that grievous sexual violence continues to be rampant in a number of countries, including the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chad.

Now is the time to translate the commitment we made in that resolution into concrete action. While the report addresses a broad range of issues, I would like to focus here on three points that we regard as particularly important: data collection and reporting, impunity and accountability, and coordination within the United Nations system.

The first important challenge we face is to clarify what our objectives are in collecting data, to enhance the systems we employ to that end, and to report on sexual violence. In order for the international community, and the Security Council in particular, to be able to act against sexual violence in armed conflict, accurate data collection on the ground and timely reporting are vital. We therefore welcome the decision of the Secretary-General to take action to "ensure more coherent, comprehensive and regular reporting on sexual violence" (*S/2009/362, para. 53*) through the senior-level Mission focal point system. This system will expand the capacity of a mission to engage in monitoring and reporting and to "coordinate with the United Nations country team to review current data collection methods and databases" (ibid.) with a view to enabling the reporting mechanism to produce more coherent and comprehensive information.

Bearing in mind the newly adopted resolution 1882 (2009), United Nations agencies concerned with sexual violence need to increase their cooperation with the monitoring and reporting mechanisms led by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and UNICEF.

In collecting data on sexual violence and in the light of the sensitivity of the issue, the first priority should be protection of the victims and their privacy. Establishing a commission of inquiry to investigate sexual violence in conflict countries, as recommended by the Secretary-General, is an interesting option.

However, we need to give careful consideration to the feasibility of the idea, and specifically to how information would be collected and shared and to whether the objective of data collection would be to facilitate the prosecution of perpetrators or simply to build a strong information resource.

The second challenge is ending impunity for those responsible for sexual violence in armed conflict and ensuring accountability. Both are essential, and we therefore strongly urge the Governments of countries in conflict to undertake comprehensive legal and judicial reforms. In this connection, we are encouraged to learn from the report that some progress has in fact

been made in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and the Sudan towards improving legal mechanisms against sexual violence.

If we want these efforts to succeed, however, we must provide capacity-building assistance, such as training for judicial and law enforcement officials on international human rights and humanitarian law, as well as on the revision of national laws and improving the manner in which they are applied.

We expect that serious crimes, such as crimes against humanity, will be referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC). At the same time, bearing in mind that the ICC prosecutes only those who bear the greatest responsibility, the Security Council must consider feasible and appropriate alternative mechanisms for ensuring the accountability of all perpetrators of sexual violence in any conflict situation. We anticipate that the Secretary-General will include a proposal for such mechanisms in his follow-up report.

Thirdly, strengthening coordination within the United Nations system is essential to implementing resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), as a number of United Nations agencies are engaged in combating sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. We support the commitment that the Secretary-General makes in his report to strengthening coordination in the United Nations system so that there will be a coherent and comprehensive multisector response both at Headquarters and at the local level.

One useful coordination mechanism is United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, which is expected to be utilized not only to promote the sharing of information and eliminate the duplication of work, but also to integrate the policies and programmes of the United Nations system as a whole, particularly in the field. In that context, we note that the Secretary-General is considering the appointment of a senior person to be responsible for coordinating the prevention of and response to sexual violence across the United Nations system.

Allow me to say just a few more words on the subject of human security in connection with the topic that we are now discussing. In order to respond effectively to the needs of women and girls who are victims of sexual violence, we must apply the concept of human security. Such a multisector approach focuses on both protection and empowerment at the individual and community levels. For that reason, at the sixth meeting of Friends of Human Security, held this past June and co-hosted by Japan and Mexico, the subject of sexual violence against women in armed conflict had a prominent place on the agenda.

For the same reason, through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, Japan has been providing support for projects that address the issue of violence against women and its root causes in a comprehensive and multisectoral manner in countries including the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Burundi.

In 2010, we shall commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. As that observance draws near, we must redouble our efforts to produce concrete and tangible results on this important issue. The Security Council simply must strengthen its response to sexual violence in armed conflict. To that end, we request the Secretary-General to continue to submit regular reports on the progress that is being made in the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008), as it is a matter of great concern to all of us.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to join preceding speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for his report (S/2009/362) and for his presence at this meeting. I also welcome his personal commitment to combating the phenomenon of sexual violence in armed conflict.

Both resolution 1820 (2008) and resolution 1882 (2009) on children and armed conflict, which was adopted last week, represent important steps towards the development of a system of comprehensive practical measures to protect civilians, particularly women and children, in situations of armed conflict. All the resolutions that have been adopted in that regard contribute to ongoing efforts to establish and codify international humanitarian law, which must be implemented. Today's open debate on this issue will undoubtedly help to strengthen efforts and initiatives in this area, and we wish to commend the United Kingdom delegation for organizing it.

The changing and complex nature of armed conflict has caused great harm to large numbers of civilians, in particular the most vulnerable groups, girls and women, whom it has made more vulnerable to sexual violence. We agree with the Secretary-General that sexual violence dehumanizes its victims, inflicting

intense psychological and physical trauma, and is often accompanied by fear, shame and stigma, which usually cause victims not to report such crimes.

The widespread and systematic perpetration of sexual violence diminishes the prospects for early post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding, and usually unleashes a vicious circle of attacks and counterattacks. In our view, that justifies the great importance attached to continued efforts to develop practical mechanisms for preventing such heinous acts and violations against these vulnerable groups.

Here, we express our regret at the continued attacks on civilians in armed conflicts, including acts of sexual violence and violence based on ethnicity, gender or religion or aimed at achieving specific political goals. We strongly condemn such practices, which constitute clear violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Indeed, the relevant Security Council resolutions will be devoid of any value if they are not implemented in all conflict areas, including the occupied Palestinian territories and other occupied Arab territories, which have been subject for many decades to the systematic commission of violations and inhuman practices against civilians, including severe human rights violations against women and children.

We had hoped that the report now before the Council would address violence against women in general and refer to the blatant violations of international law being perpetrated in the occupied Palestinian territories, including starvation and denial of access to medical supplies, hospitals and clinics, as well as to the torture and harassment being endured by Palestinian women in Israeli prisons. Such practices constitute physical and psychological violence, and we ask that they be taken into consideration in future reports. The same applies to the violations that have been committed in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Some progress has undoubtedly been made in efforts to combat violence against women in conflict areas, particularly in Africa. However, we must continue to support Governments in protecting their citizens by helping them to formulate and implement comprehensive strategies to combat sexual violence, bearing in mind each country's specificities and particular needs. We agree with the Secretary-General that inadequate measures to prevent sexual violence, protect civilians, combat impunity for sexual violence and address continuing discrimination against women and girls, as well the failure of some parties to conflicts to honour their commitments, have contributed greatly to the exacerbation and spread of sexual violence.

Therefore, countries must make greater efforts to build their national capacities to combat this phenomenon. That, of course, will require the reform of judicial systems to bring them into conformity with recognized international norms. There is a need to ensure that the perpetrators and masterminds of sexual violence are denied any kind of amnesty or immunity in order to guarantee justice for the victims.

Furthermore, efforts must be made to raise social awareness of issues related to sexual violence and of the need to avoid marginalizing or stigmatizing its victims and to rehabilitate them. In this respect, I welcome the initiatives undertaken by various United Nations entities, including the Peacebuilding Commission and peacekeeping operations, in the areas of peace and security, human rights, humanitarian affairs and development, as well as efforts to provide strategic advice, raise awareness, promote institutional reforms, offer support and services to victims, and provide monitoring and protection. We hope that all those efforts will help put an end to sexual violence and impunity for such crimes. It is also necessary to increase women's participation in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations.

We have taken note of the recommendations that the Secretary-General makes in his report. We agree with him that it is essential that all United Nations actors ensure full respect for ethical, humanitarian and safety standards for researching, measuring and collecting data on sexual violence. We endorse all of the report's recommendations.

We welcome the Secretary-General proposal for the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry to investigate sexual violence in certain conflict areas. We are ready to engage with other Council members in a positive discussion on that recommendation.

Mr. Mugoya (Uganda): I wish to thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for organizing today's debate on this very important subject. I wish also to welcome the Secretary-General and to thank him for the comprehensive report (S/2009/362) he has submitted on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008).

At the outset, let me reiterate that Uganda deplores and condemns sexual violence and supports the various efforts by the United Nations and other stakeholders to eradicate its use as an instrument of war. Uganda has continued to advocate at the regional and international levels for respect for and protection in armed conflict of women and children who would otherwise be victims of sexual violence.

It is clear from the report of the Secretary-General that the incidence of widespread sexual violence tends to escalate in situations where State institutions have broken down. It is also clear that this is a global problem and that both Stat and non-State actors have been responsible for some of the very serious abuses that have taken place. Thus, sexual violence is a symptom of a much bigger problem, about which Uganda is greatly concerned.

There should be no impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence, and all efforts must be made to ensure that culprits are held accountable for their despicable actions. Only then can victims begin to heal and to develop a measure of confidence that they have not been abandoned altogether. There remains an urgent need to sensitize all parties to armed conflict to the fact that certain practices are not acceptable under any circumstances.

Effective implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) also requires that, at the very minimum, an atmosphere of peace, security and stability be in place. The most effective way to avoid sexual violence during armed conflict is to ensure that peace and the rule of law are restored in the affected countries. In order to address the situation more realistically and conclusively, institutions of the State have to be strengthened. When institutions of the State such as the police, prisons, governance and the army are well established, law enforcement can then be enhanced and severe penalties for perpetrators will become an actual deterrent. There are instances where perpetrators of sexual violence still live openly among their victims, with impunity.

Possible solutions to drawn-out conflicts need to be addressed in a holistic way. For instance, integrating the various forces in an armed conflict requires more than just a simple change of uniform. It requires a change in mindset, and it requires counselling, training and capacity-building. The integration of armed forces should be well structured. There should be strict vetting of recruits for the armed forces so that people who are at high risk of becoming sexual predators are excluded. High-ranking officers implicated in sexual violence should be removed from the ranks of armed personnel as an example to others and in order to send a clear message of zero tolerance for sexual violence.

It is incumbent upon the Council to ensure that resolutions to establish or renew mandates or to impose enforcement measures under Chapter VII of the Charter contain provisions, as appropriate, on the prevention of and response to sexual violence, with corresponding requirements on reporting to the Council. The United Nations, regional organizations and civil society need to work together to train good mediators, including female mediators, in adequate numbers and to mobilize sufficient resources to carry out these activities. Uganda supports the creation of an effective mechanism that will galvanize the various efforts to find a lasting solution to this problem.

In that regard, my delegation welcomes the establishment of United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict. Its existence is a first step towards improving the coordination of existing activities and the exchange of crucial information between United Nations Headquarters and country-level offices. We also welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to submit an annual report on implementation of resolution 1820 (2008).

Mr. Shcherbak (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation is grateful to the delegation of the United Kingdom for the timely initiative of convening this Security Council meeting on such an important issue. Our thanks go to the Secretary-General for his report (S/2009/362) on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) and for his briefing on the matter.

Like previous speakers, we believe that sexual violence, both during conflict and in peacetime, is a heinous crime that must be strenuously condemned and severely punished. Of particular concern are situations in which the phenomenon is widespread and systematic, which could be a matter of concern for the Security Council pursuant to paragraph 1 of resolution 1820 (2008). But it should not be forgotten that women and children continue to be victims of premeditated attacks, including acts of terrorism, the indiscriminate or excessive use of force and other acts.

In that connection, we support the Secretary-General's appeal to parties to conflict to comply strictly with international criminal law, humanitarian law and international human rights and refugee law. Violence takes many different forms, and we believe that due attention must be paid to all categories of violence. That conforms to the spirit of resolution 1325 (2000), which remains the primary point of reference for protecting women and guaranteeing their rights during conflict.

Such a balanced approach was reflected in resolution 1882 (2009), on children and armed conflict, which the Security Council adopted three days ago. In that resolution, the killing and maiming of children and sexual violence committed against them are highlighted as crimes requiring priority attention.

Against that background, a number of the Secretary-General's practical proposals on strengthening the efforts of the United Nations system to combat sexual violence are of interest. However, the question arises of whether, for example, it would be fair to establish a commission of inquiry or special Security Council mechanisms on the single issue of sexual violence. Is that not an excessively narrow way of looking at this issue? Should there not be a comprehensive and all-encompassing approach to the issue of violence and violations of the rights of civilians during armed conflict? Should we really turn a blind eye to other grievous crimes against civilians, including women and children? In that connection, the proposals of the Secretary-General merit careful study, perhaps in a broader context.

On the whole, such issues should be considered without isolating them from the entire range of problems of conflict settlement and gender equality. It should be recalled that an important precondition for overcoming violence against women is full participation by women themselves in peace processes and in post-conflict reconstruction. In such processes there must be more consistent implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and other specialized human rights instruments.

The Russian Federation is confident that through joint efforts we cannot only reduce the incidence of sexual violence during conflict but also make significant progress towards gender equality and the advancement of women, in the spirit of the decisions taken at the fourth World Conference on Women and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome the initiative of your delegation, Mr. President, to hold this open debate on the topic of women and peace and security. I also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for introducing his report (S/2009/362) pursuant to resolution 1820 (2008) and for his presence here today.

The Secretary-General points out in his report that, with regard to sexual violence in conflicts and post-conflict situations, "the majority of past abuses remain to be accounted for" (*S/2009/362, para. 9*). That is why passivity before this scourge is not an option. The lack of action would send the wrong message that sexual violence is permissible. The international community, and the Security Council in particular, must act and show unequivocally that acts of sexual violence will not remain unpunished.

My delegation reiterates the call on Member States that have experienced cases of sexual violence in conflict or post-conflict situations to investigate these crimes and to launch judicial proceedings against those allegedly responsible for these crimes. The brutality of sexual violence in some conflicts is alarming. In the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, there have been at least 200,000 cases since 1996, while today we are even seeing a trend towards the use of sexual violence against men. We acknowledge the decision of President Kabila to implement a zero-tolerance policy with respect to the use of sexual violence by the Congolese Armed Forces, and we will follow attentively the trials of five high-ranking army officers who allegedly committed serious human rights violations, including crimes involving sexual violence.

Mexico once again reiterates the importance of the International Criminal Court in prosecuting, when appropriate, those responsible for certain acts of sexual violence that, in accordance with the Rome Statute, constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, for which there is no room for consideration of rank or privilege.

The recent adoption of resolution 1882 (2009), although it refers to children, represents a significant step towards tackling sexual violence, since it broadens the criteria for including, in the annexes to the Secretary-General's reports, parties to armed conflicts who, in violation of relevant international law, commit acts that cause the deaths and mutilation of children, rape and other forms of sexual violence. The resolution also calls for improved communication between the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and the sanctions committees of the Security Council through an exchange of information on violations and abuses committed against children.

The Secretary-General's report clearly illustrates the complexity of the task of collecting information on sexual violence, given its inhuman nature, the psychological and physical trauma that it inflicts, and the fear, shame and stigma that it entails for its victims. That is why my Government welcomes the recommendation to establish a commission to investigate violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law and to report on these violations, focusing in particular on cases of sexual violence in the situations in Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan. We also welcome the possibility of establishing such commissions for other conflicts in which sexual violence is perpetrated. The commission of enquiry should also identify those responsible for crimes of sexual violence and report on the measures that States and other parties to the conflict may take or fail to take. Such information will be extremely useful to the work of the various sanctions committees.

My delegation also takes note of the other recommendations of the Secretary-General, and agrees that Security Council resolutions establishing or renewing mandates or imposing measures under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter must include provisions to prevent and, most importantly, to respond to sexual violence, and on the obligation to report the Council.

With respect to the possibility of appointing a senior person with responsibility to attend to the prevention and response to sexual violence across the United Nations system, Mexico believes that a very careful consideration of the matter will be necessary, in particular with regard to whether this option would truly be the best response the United Nations system could provide in addressing the scourge of sexual violence.

We welcome the actions of the Secretary-General to strengthen coordination within the United Nations system in order to work jointly to prevent and respond to sexual violence, and we invite him to continue to update this coordination, in particular among the teams on the ground, since that is where the victims of sexual violence are to be found.

With respect to political leadership, Mexico supports the Secretary-General's request for high-level officials of the Secretariat and the heads of the relevant organizations, funds and programmes to play a greater role in raising awareness on sexual violence. The United Nations response to this scourge must be multisectoral, organized and coherent. We need a thorough analysis of the work undertaken by the various agencies and United Nations teams in this area, with a view to avoiding duplication of efforts and to promoting a more effective exchange of information. This would require a major but justified effort to address sexual violence.

Finally, I would like to stress the need for a full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the importance of incorporating the gender perspective in efforts to deal with situations of armed conflict. Women's participation in police and armed forces and peacekeeping operations must be a priority in conflict situations where there is sexual violence in order to contribute to its eradication. Similarly, the inclusion of women in mediation processes is crucial to guaranteeing lasting peace.

Mr. Bui The Giang (Viet Nam): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on the first report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/362) on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008). I am also thankful to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report and his highly focused briefing today.

More than a year ago, following the Security Council's open debate on widespread and systematic rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in armed conflict, this Council adopted resolution 1820 (2008), leading to visibly improved awareness of sexual violence across the United Nations system, the international community and many conflict areas. Since then, sexual violence has been dealt with in many reports of the Secretary-General and outcome

documents of the Security Council, as well as many other United Nations forums.

The adoption of resolution 1882 (2009) on children and armed conflict early this week, with criteria expanded to include in the annex lists of the Secretary-General's reports parties that engage in patterns of killing, maiming and sexual violence against children, once again reaffirmed the Council's resolve to halt those violations.

Given the increasing sexual abuse and violence in many parts of the world, which we categorically condemn, Viet Nam supports efforts to fully translate into practice the 2007 United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict initiative and other measures aimed at preventing and responding to sexual violence in armed conflict in the areas of humanitarian assistance, awareness-raising, advocacy, capacity-building and training, legal, judicial and institutional reforms, and the provision of services to victims, and so on. We support the ongoing efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and other agencies to integrate sexual violence into protection of civilians mandates and to develop important materials, such as gender guidelines for military personnel in peacekeeping operations and the *Analytical Inventory of Responses by Peacekeeping Personnel to War-Related Violence against Women*.

Much remains to be done in the struggle against sexual violence in armed conflict. Greater efforts should be made to promote the empowerment of women and to improve women's participation in the early stages of peace processes, particularly in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Along that line, we support a more proactive engagement of the United Nations in increasing women's participation in peace negotiations, as well as in political and peacekeeping missions, as an effective way to better support women and girl victims on the ground, while helping to foster women's empowerment in societies emerging from conflict.

Measures to protect women and girls from sexual violence in conflict situations should be designed and implemented as part of a broader strategic framework that covers social, economic and development issues. As such, one of the best ways to prevent and respond to sexual violence is to further mainstream gender in early recovery planning and financing at the national level. The United Nations, particularly the Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations Development Programme and donors, should further assist national Governments in building gender-related capacity and developing gender-sensitive programmes to help survivors of sexual violence with a wide range of services — from access to justice, relief from stigma and ostracism, and provision of mental and psychological health care to support for greater physical, economic and social security through employment and income generation, and involvement in decision-making.

Underlining the high importance of international assistance and cooperation, we remain of the view that States bear the primary responsibility to protect their populations from all types of violations, including sexual violence. At the same time, my delegation believes that, in order to ensure the best possible cost-effective performance of the whole system, it is imperative to promote more efficient use and better coordination of existing mechanisms and structures, while giving initiatives on creating new ones serious and comprehensive consideration.

Finally, members may rest assured of Viet Nam's resolute determination to work constructively, together with all international partners, towards the strict implementation of all relevant international laws and Security Council resolutions, most directly resolution 1820 (2008), to put an end to sexual violence and to ensure a worthy place for women and girls in the life of humanity.

Mr. Vilović (Croatia): At the outset, I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate, under the United Kingdom presidency, on women, peace and security, with a focus on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008). Croatia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later on behalf of the European Union.

We also express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his first progress report pursuant to that resolution (S/2009/362). We view it as an important initial road map for our future work on that issue. We further perceive the Secretary-General's leadership on that issue as vital to ensure that political momentum is further galvanized on behalf of resolution 1820 (2008), with a view to urgently addressing outstanding key challenges that continue to

hinder progress in combating sexual violence in conflict-affected situations.

The adoption of resolution 1820 (2008) represented a significant follow-up to the Council's landmark resolution 1325 (2000). Under resolution 1820 (2008), we expressed our political will to further advance efforts to prevent and respond to the use of sexual violence in conflict-related situations. Croatia was an ardent supporter of resolution 1820 (2008) from its conceptual phase to its ultimate adoption, and we continue to reiterate our full support for the resolution's unequivocal implementation. In that respect, we reiterate our call on all parties to armed conflict to strictly adhere to relevant international law.

Despite the wide-scale support shown for resolution 1820 (2008) last year, the Secretary-General's report serves as an important reminder that its overall implementation remains weak and that the deliberate and targeted use of sexual violence against women and girls in conflict-affected situations continues to be a key challenge of our time. Furthermore, in certain parts of the world, such as the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, widespread and systematic sexual violations are being perpetrated systematically and at levels of such brutality that they defy belief. Also disturbing to us is the increasing trend of unrestrained accompanying violations against victims, such as their abduction, enforced prostitution and enslavement.

Croatia, too, bears its own painful reminders that sexual violence in conflict-related situations is not a relic of the distant past. Indeed, as the Secretary-General points out in his report, we, too, experienced first-hand the infliction of widespread and systematic rape and sexual violence as a tactic of war to terrorize and displace civilian populations in the 1990s. In that respect, the particularity of the conflict in our region is partially evidenced in the case law of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Croatia therefore supports the systematic referral of serious crimes, such as crimes against humanity, to the International Criminal Court.

As part of our deliberations today, aimed at strengthening the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008), we view the report of the Secretary-General as having raised some significant implications for our future work. It highlights important hurdles and gaps that are keeping effective protection elusive and preventing genuine change on the ground. In that respect, we appreciate the Secretary-General's candour as to the limitations of certain aspects of his report, especially with regard to his specific concerns regarding the collection of information on sexual violence, as requested under resolution 1820 (2008).

Today's debate, and any possible future outcome, will serve as an important litmus test as to the level of our political determination to strengthen existing efforts, including the elimination of prevailing impunity in many conflict-affected situations.

The Secretary-General, in pointing to the urgency and magnitude of the problem, has correctly underscored the need for a mutually reinforcing multisectoral response by the United Nations system that must address this problem decisively in order to ensure more effective protection and assistance for victims. Here, the Security Council has an important role to play. While we welcome measures already taken to date by the United Nations towards the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008), we see the need for a wider focus within the Council's own agenda on issues related to the resolution than has so far been the case.

Furthermore, the establishment of a regular reporting cycle by the Secretary-General on resolution 1820 (2008) will be crucial to that process. Improving the added value of such inputs will require the further development of United Nations capacities in the strategic collection and analysis of violations against women and girls in conflict situations. Calls for the establishment of a commission of inquiry, as outlined in the report, warrant our serious consideration.

The monitoring of sexual violence can be further strengthened by closer synergies with other existing monitoring mechanisms. In this context, Croatia strongly welcomes the adoption this week of resolution 1882 (2009), on children and armed conflict, expanding the monitoring and reporting mechanism trigger to include rape and other forms of sexual violence. This will not only serve as an important milestone for the children-and-armed-conflict agenda, but also as a valuable complementary mechanism for monitoring implementation of resolution 1820 (2008), especially for young women up to the age of 18.

Croatia also believes that the revised aide-mémoire (S/PRST/2009/1, annex) adopted in January on the protection of civilians, including women and

girls, affected by armed conflict will also facilitate our future efforts towards achieving effective implementation of resolution 1820 (2008).

We also join others who call for more to be done at the field operation level to fill existing gaps, especially through better integration of the gender perspective in the peacekeeping, peacebuilding and humanitarian arenas to strengthen mandates for the protection of women. We continue to urge strengthened female leadership in the field, with more female engagement at all levels. Furthermore, gender equality and respect for women's human rights must be at the centre of all United Nations missions, with strict adherence to the Organization's zero-tolerance policy on sexual violence.

While Croatia will be looking to the United Nations system to step up its efforts to implement the relevant recommendations in the report, Member States will also have to do their part. More needs to be done to ensure full implementation of Member States' commitments pursuant to resolutions 1820 (2008) and 1325 (2000).

Functioning national legal institutions need to be established, underpinned by a strong normative framework ensuring full gender equality and inclusiveness, as well as endorsing women's political, economic and human rights, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which marks its thirtieth anniversary this year. Of paramount importance is the elimination of existing climates of impunity by enabling the rule of law to prevail. Together, all of these elements will serve as strong deterrents for future perpetrators.

Greater cooperation between the United Nations and regional mechanisms can be further built upon to support national efforts in this respect. Drawing on previous peacebuilding experience and increasing the number of deployable civilian experts, particularly from affected regions and who possess the relevant gender-perspective expertise and appropriate training, could significantly contribute to overall efforts. Furthermore, we must not overlook the value of the capacity of local women to play a role as powerful advocates for protection by changing attitudes on the ground.

For hundreds of thousands of women and girls worldwide, time is of the essence. Now is not the time for us to be complacent in our efforts. Croatia hopes that today's debate will pave the way for further timely and concrete measures aimed at bringing about effective implementation of the 1820 agenda, with the ultimate aim of ending sexual violence in conflict-affected and related situations.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for Costa Rica to speak today in its capacity as Chair of the Human Security Network, consisting of the following countries: Austria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland and Thailand, and South Africa as an observer.

To begin, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this important debate. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his presentation. We welcome the submission of his report (S/2009/362), which contains valuable recommendations on combating sexual violence.

In the past 10 years, the Security Council has increasingly considered security issues with a gender-equality perspective and has enshrined its commitment in resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). Those resolutions place women at the centre of consideration of security issues, recognizing them not merely as victims but also as important actors in building sustainable peace and security and in fostering development in societies experiencing or emerging from armed conflict. Furthermore, resolution 1612 (2005) and the recently adopted resolution 1882 (2009), both on children and armed conflict, along with resolution 1674 (2006), on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, strengthen and expand the Security Council protection framework in the area of sexual violence.

We commend the progress the Security Council has made in thematic discussions on this issue and the positive developments stemming from it. We also welcome the active interest and the commitment on gender-related issues seen in the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Human Rights Council, the United Nations funds and programmes and the relevant human-rights treaty bodies, especially the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Unfortunately, progress towards implementation of cross-cutting gender commitments, with regard to

curbing, punishing and protecting against sexual violence in armed conflict situations, has been slow and uneven. This is the result of a number of factors, including weak coordination and fragmented responses within the United Nations system, insufficient funding and human resources, inefficient accountability measures and a lack of firm political will. The Secretary-General's report highlights the challenges posed by inadequate preventive measures, the failure to end impunity and persistent discrimination against women and girls in law and in practice, and the insufficient and inadequate access to assistance and treatment for victims.

In the light of those challenges, we believe that a more comprehensive and strategic approach is needed, focused on six critical areas: prevention, protection, women's participation, accountability, assistance to victims and data collection.

The first area is prevention, which is essential in combating sexual violence and which must be tailored to the specific circumstances of each situation. Gender-based violence, discrimination and inequality contribute to exacerbating sexual violence when the rule of law breaks down. Efforts must be made to eliminate prejudice, discriminatory social patterns, historically rooted inequalities and harmful traditional and cultural practices that condone sexual violence. In addition, these measures should be aimed at raising community awareness and eliciting more direct engagement by traditional and religious leaders.

The second focus is on the need to strengthen the protection capacity not only of States but also of United Nations personnel on the ground. Security sector reform and the rule of law can play a vital role in this process. International cooperation should increase resources to improve policing and civilian capacities, as well as providing technical assistance and mentoring to help train military, police and other security forces to deal with cases of sexual violence. Without question, this can result in an increased awareness of human-rights standards and obligations under international law.

In dealing with peacekeeping operations and protection mandates, we need to develop clear gender-sensitive operational guidelines in order to effectively tackle sexual violence. Enhanced coordination, integrated strategic frameworks and united priorities among the various United Nations actors on the ground are fundamental to producing a more effective response to this problem. Such a response, combined with the contributions of the Peacebuilding Commission, would, we believe, result in a more strategic approach and more effective engagement.

The third area concerns participation. Despite the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) nine years ago, the participation of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding remains minimal. As reaffirmed in resolution 1820 (2008), we must continue to strive to encourage the empowerment of women and their systematic and effective participation at all levels in peacekeeping and political missions. We should also increase the number of female heads of mission, military observers, civilian police and United Nations mediators. Women also have a critical role to play in the long-term prevention of conflicts. At the same time, we must also study and understand the obstacles to promoting women's participation in these fields if we are to reverse that trend.

The fourth area of interest is accountability, which, through justice, fosters the promotion and sustainability of peace. In this regard, we consider that amnesties should exclude crimes of sexual violence. All parties, State and non-State, must always refrain from committing and tolerating sexual violence. All necessary steps should be taken to protect individuals, punish perpetrators and provide remedy to victims. Zero-tolerance policies and the principle of command responsibility are also important measures to enforce accountability.

In this context, the genuine commitment of civilian and military leaders is important to reducing sexual violence. International cooperation must support efforts to hold perpetrators accountable and to ensure equal and effective access to justice under internationally agreed standards. The complementary role of international justice mechanisms, such as the International Criminal Court, inter alia, can also play a relevant role in supporting national efforts to fight impunity, as appropriate.

The Security Council has recognized that sexual violence in situations of armed conflict may, under some circumstances, constitute a threat to international peace and security. Therefore, we believe that the Security Council should include gender equality concerns as well as provisions to prevent and respond to sexual violence when establishing or renewing

peacekeeping mandates. The Security Council should consider targeted and effective means to ensure compliance. In addition, the Council should improve the communication and exchange of information among its subsidiary bodies in order to ensure a more coherent approach to combating sexual violence.

The fifth area that deserves our attention is assistance to victims. In addition to the aforementioned measures, there must be a multisectoral approach to the assistance and social protection of victims, in particular to ensure their access to medical care, psychological and psycho-social support, legal assistance, education and sustainable socio-economic reintegration. Assistance measures must focus on avoiding the marginalization and stigmatization of victims, and facilitate victims' social reintegration to prevent further trauma. Initiatives such as the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict should be complemented by efforts to address the root causes of violence. In the case of refugees and displaced persons, the special needs of women and girls, including medical care during repatriation and resettlement, should also be taken into account.

Lastly, timely, objective, accurate and reliable data collection is important to enhancing our understanding of the various forms of sexual violence in armed conflict situations and their aftermath so as to ensure the appropriate responses and to move forward in the implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

We also encourage donors, researchers and others to support ethical investigation and data collection efforts in post-conflict settings that improve our ability to prevent and respond to this problem. Furthermore, in collecting data, it is important to ensure the disaggregation by age and sex of victims and perpetrators alike in order to target prevention and response activities.

We need to improve the effectiveness of monitoring and reporting to facilitate strategic planning and assessment of progress. We will revisit this important matter once the Secretary-General submits the recommendations in his next report.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his presence and his statement. I also thank him for his report (S/2009/362), submitted pursuant to resolution 1820 (2008). We also welcome the presence of the Deputy Secretary-General at this meeting.

Ten years ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. In June last year, the Security Council adopted resolution 1820 (2008) on combating sexual violence. The two resolutions laid the foundation for the Security Council's response to questions relating to women in the field of peace and security. In recent years, with the joint efforts of the United Nations, Member States, regional organizations and civil society, concepts such as gender equality, the empowerment of women and the prevention of and fight against sexual violence have steadily gained ground, and work in these areas has made remarkable progress.

However, the cruel reality is that women remain the primary victims in many current conflicts, and sexual violence against women remains a big problem. The international community still has a lot of work to do in protecting women and defending their rights and interests. China condemns all acts of violence against women in armed conflict, including sexual violence. We urge parties to conflicts to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law. We call on the Governments of countries concerned to investigate and bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against women in armed conflicts. We urge the parties that have not done so to accede to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as soon as possible.

We join the Secretary-General in endorsing a policy of zero tolerance for acts of sexual exploitation committed by peacekeeping personnel in the hope that troop-contributing countries will strengthen the training and supervision of such personnel and their accountability in this regard, in order to ensure that the relevant United Nations code of conduct will be effectively observed.

I would like to make a few comments on the work under way to strengthen the protection of women in armed conflict. First, the Security Council can play a unique role, and the relevant bodies of the United Nations should perform their respective functions and strengthen coordination and cooperation. In his report, the Secretary-General analyses many characteristics of the question of sexual violence, the most salient of which is its close connection to armed conflict. As the primary organ responsible for maintaining international

peace and security, the Security Council should address this issue in the context of relevant political situations and peace processes, focusing on effective conflict prevention, the maintenance of peace and post-conflict reconstruction, so as to create a political, security and legal environment conducive to alleviating and eliminating sexual violence.

The General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Human Rights Council, the Secretariat and the relevant treaty bodies should play their due roles by focusing on aspects within the purview of their respective functions. The Security Council should strengthen communication and cooperation with the aforementioned bodies to create synergy when addressing this issue. We are not in favour of the Security Council's all-too-frequent use of sanctions or the threat of sanctions. The Council should exercise caution in applying sanctions in the context of fighting sexual violence.

Secondly, at all stages of peace processes, greater attention should be paid to the status and role of women, and efforts made to raise awareness of women's issues and to nurture a culture of greater respect for women. It is necessary to place great value on women's special needs and concerns in the areas of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding in order to enable them to fully enjoy their rights to participate and make decisions in peace processes and to create a favourable environment for women's lives and development. All that will contribute to fundamentally changing the vulnerable condition of women and effectively safeguard their rights and interests.

Thirdly, Governments bear the primary responsibility for protecting the women of their respective countries. The international community should offer constructive assistance. The responsibility for implementing relevant Security Council resolutions on the protection of women rests primarily with Governments. Situations vary from country to country, and the international community should respect the Governments of the countries concerned in formulating and implementing measures in the light of those countries' specific circumstances so as to ensure full national ownership.

It should be stressed that whether a country is in the midst of or emerging from conflict, it is often faced with a number of challenges. The international community should support countries' capacity-building efforts on the basis of the principles of the United Nations Charter and in respect for their desires.

Fourthly, efforts to encourage and support the participation of civil society in protecting women should be pursued. Many male and female staff members of non-governmental organizations are working hard, in difficult circumstances on the ground, to protect the rights and interests of women. Their work deserves our appreciation. China supports their ongoing constructive role in protecting women in armed conflict and encourages them to remain in contact with relevant United Nations entities and agencies, especially those directly involved in women's issues, and to submit appropriate proposals.

We note the Secretary-General's proposal for the establishment of a commission of inquiry to investigate sexual violence in the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chad and to make recommendations to the Security Council on effective ways to fight impunity. We suggest that the Secretary-General communicate and coordinate extensively with the countries concerned with respect to the issues and that it seek their prior consent. At the same time, in addressing issues related to sexual violence, we must distinguish acts committed by Governments from those committed by rebel groups. We urge all parties concerned to address every aspect of violence against women in armed conflict in a comprehensive and balanced manner.

In addressing the issue of women and peace and security, the Security Council should not only regard women as the victims of armed conflict, but also consider the important role they can play in the peace process. In October 2008, under China's presidency, the Security Council held a serious debate on the role of women in the peace process (see S/PV.6005) and achieved desirable results. We hope that the Council will continue to attach importance to this issue in the future.

The Chinese Government has always attached great importance to protecting the rights and interests of women and to advancing their status. We will continue to work with the international community to further combat sexual violence, enhance the status of women in the peace processes of countries concerned, and meet all our goals in the field of women and peace and security.

Mr. Tiendrébéogo (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): We thank you, Sir, for organizing today's debate on such an important issue. We also thank the Secretary-General for introducing his first report (S/2009/362) pursuant to resolution 1820 (2008), and welcome the relevant analyses and recommendations it contains.

Sexual violence is among the most heinous crimes committed in armed conflict and has become a veritable weapon of war, in which women and girls pay a very heavy price. Several initiatives have been undertaken to put a halt to this phenomenon, including the adoption of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), whereby the Security Council took an important step in its efforts to combat sexual violence in armed conflict. Unfortunately, it must be noted that such acts continue, in flagrant violation of the fundamental principles of human rights, international humanitarian law and relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Sexual violence is committed deliberately, in various ways and to different ends by all categories of parties to conflicts, including members of armed forces and State police, despite the fact that the latter's primary duty is to protect the civilian population. In addition to its direct physical and psychological impact on victims and their families, such violence goes hand in hand with insecurity and with restrictions on the enjoyment of human rights and victims' full participation in conflict settlement and reconstruction. Unfortunately, social and cultural factors remain obstacles to assessing the extent and gravity of the phenomenon and its consequences, and they must be addressed.

The responsibility for eradicating this scourge and protecting its victims belongs primarily to States and all the parties to a conflict. From preventive measures to punishment to the ratification of relevant international instruments, every means are available to States to act effectively. It is important in particular to create a sustainable security environment and to establish independent and accessible justice systems capable of repairing the damage and combating impunity. Medical, psychological and economic care is also essential to victims.

Unfortunately, and in spite of everything, no form of reparation or treatment, howsoever effective, can permanently erase the scars borne by victims and their loved ones. It is therefore necessary to focus our efforts on prevention, strengthening the rule of law, respect for human rights, good governance and, where appropriate, reform of the security and justice sectors.

My delegation welcomes United Nations activities on this issue, in particular the Secretary-General's global awareness-raising campaign. The gravity of the situation requires a comprehensive and sustainable response through a common strategy. The United Nations should continue to build its capacity for action and coordination in order to better assist actors in the field, with the involvement at all levels of all members of the United Nations family. The appointment of a senior official on this issue would help the process, and we also take note of other initiatives of the Secretary-General to strengthen the contribution of the United Nations system.

With respect to peacekeeping operations, it is essential to design and implement an appropriate training programme on international humanitarian law, human rights, international criminal law and relevant resolutions of the Security Council. Moreover, the effectiveness of a policy of zero tolerance, the integration of women into the staff of peacekeeping operations, and the identification of measures to prevent sexual violence in resolutions establishing or renewing peacekeeping mandates should remain among our priorities. These are the challenges that Member States, troop-contributing countries and the Security Council should take up.

Sexual violence is a pernicious evil that has a deep impact on the enduring restoration of stability and peace. It is therefore essential that peace agreements take sexual violence into account, in particular in the course of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and security sector reform. We welcome the concerted activities of the United Nations to integrate concerns about sexual violence into mediation processes and to increase the number of women mediators, who undoubtedly add value to peace and ceasefire agreements.

For all these reasons, my delegation welcomes the convening in June, under the auspices of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, of a colloquium on the theme "Conflict Related Sexual Violence in Peace Negotiations: Implementing Security Council Resolution 1820 (2008)". Its conclusions represent important options for consideration.

The Security Council has an important role to play in this collective effort, as it demonstrated yet again this week with its adoption of resolution 1882 (2009), extending the criteria for triggering the reporting and monitoring mechanism to include sexual violence against children. Moreover, the Council should establish a participatory process for collecting information in order to better gauge the scale and consequences of the phenomenon.

The challenges to be faced before the scourge of sexual violence in conflict zones can be definitively eradicated are still numerous. Mobilization for the full implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) must therefore remain strong at all levels.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

We welcome the Secretary-General's contribution to our debate today and the continuing presence of the Deputy Secretary-General this morning. The Secretary-General's report (S/2009/362) highlights the challenges that we face in coming to grips with the issue of sexual violence in conflict zones, and it confirms and clarifies much of what we suspected about the extent of the problem. If we are serious about preventing and resolving conflict, then we need to be serious about addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

There is no shortage of will to take forward the Council's work in this area, as Tuesday's adoption of resolution 1882 (2009) on children and armed conflict showed. There are still gaps that we need to bridge in information, capacity, coordination and imagination, and the Secretary-General's report draws these out clearly.

The proliferation of sexual violence against women and girls is in part aimed at marginalizing their contribution to society. It deliberately degrades the role that they can play in restoring the fabric of peaceful communities. The Arria formula meeting that the United Kingdom hosted in June highlighted the critical importance of enhancing women's contribution to peace processes.

Short-term measures to improve protection and enhance women's participation in decision-making have to be accompanied by longer-term efforts to establish accountability and the rule of law. More effective monitoring of patterns of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict should allow the Council to identify and mandate the action necessary to prevent it.

We therefore welcome further reports from the Secretary-General. We support his recommendation that better use be made of commissions of inquiry, and the Council should ensure that conflict-related sexual violence gets the attention it deserves in the informal Expert Group on the Protection of Civilians and in the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

Let me add on a personal note that I share completely Ambassador Rice's conviction that the time to act is now. For those of us who took part in the Security Council mission in May, it was impossible not to be moved and angered by what we saw and heard. The perpetrators of these appalling crimes want to diminish women and exclude them from their role in building peace. If I took any encouragement from our meetings with those who have suffered, it was from their determination not to just remain victims, but to play their full part in finding and securing a lasting peace in which their rights will be respected and their security assured. That is what we must support – the courage and determination of women who want to make their unique contribution to peace.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Mr. Wetland (Norway): Last week, CNN ran a story of an 8-year old Liberian girl who had been gang-raped by four boys. This happened here in the United States, in Arizona, and thus aroused reaction and became global news. However, when such atrocities happen in conflict-ridden parts of Africa and elsewhere, apathy and indifference are all too prevalent.

Daily, there is violence, molesting and suffering. Lives are ruined. We hear about villages where every single female is raped and where a girl's capacity to have children is taken away from her while she is still a child herself. We see the destruction of families and entire communities.

With the adoption of resolution 1820 (2008), building on resolution 1325 (2000) and this week supplemented by resolution 1882 (2009), we now have

a comprehensive set of norms addressing these gruesome realities.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report (S/2009/362), with its comprehensive and direct policy recommendations. In today's meeting, I would like to make the following points on what we believe, in particular, needs to be done.

First, impunity must end. Rapists and perpetrators of sexual violence must be held accountable, tried and convicted, irrespective of rank or status, by they soldier or civilian. The responsibility lies with Governments and military leaders who too often have turned a blind eye to this.

The report rightly calls for comprehensive legal and judicial reform, in conformity with international standards, without delay and with a view to bringing perpetrators to justice and to ensuring that victims are treated with dignity throughout the judicial process and that they are protected and receive remedy.

Second, while collecting evidence is difficult, it must be given the highest priority, and reporting methods must be improved. Unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance for victims of violence would help, as would security sector reform whereby the number of trained women police officers should be increased. We thus share the Secretary-General's call for increased funding to enable humanitarian programmes to prevent and respond to sexual violence. We appreciate the assurance that United Nations-managed funds will pilot a system to allow decision-makers to track gender-related actions.

Third, victims should be given better medical and psycho-social assistance. They should be ensured socio-economic rehabilitation and empowerment, as well as economic compensation and support when taking their cases to court. We would support a proposal to establish a fund to address these issues.

Fourth, expertise and capacity to address sexual violence in the field must be strengthened through systematic training of personnel.

Fifth, while United Nations organizations make important contributions to all these ends — and we commend the work done by United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Gender Standby Capacity project in this regard — we clearly see the need for stronger and more proactive ownership of this issue in the leadership of United Nations organizations and departments to ensure coordinated action, not least at field level.

We therefore support the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security to provide a strong and visible hand in the United Nations to drive and coordinate system-wide prevention of and response to sexual violence in conflict and to front the broader agenda of women's equal participation at all levels of peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

Sixth, we would welcome the establishment of a commission of inquiry to investigate and report on violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, with a particular focus on Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan. The commission would present recommendations to the Security Council on the need for improved or new mechanisms to ensure maximum accountability.

Seventh, we support the establishment of a mechanism of the Security Council to monitor how parties to armed conflict comply with obligations under international law, including addressing rape and other forms of sexual violence.

Lastly, resolution 1882 (2009) on children and armed conflict highlights and condemns rape and other forms of sexual violence against children. The possibility of listing the parties in conflict that commit rape and other forms of sexual violence against children is the right step to take, but if it is to fulfil its mandate, the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict will need increased support and resources.

Before closing, let me underscore that the challenges presented by the issues of women, peace and security and of the fight against sexual violence in armed conflict are among my Government's highest priorities. Our policy benefits greatly from the valuable input of humanitarian and civil society organizations, which often provide the most relevant experience and policy recommendations.

Sexual violence in situations of armed conflict is also a political and security question. It requires a political and security response. Members of the Security Council should therefore make sure that the issue remains prominent on the Council's agenda, and Norway would welcome a resolution to this effect. We look forward to the Secretary-General's annual

reporting on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

One year ago the Security Council, in adopting resolution 1820 (2008), recognized that conflict-related sexual violence can constitute a threat to international peace and security. Resolution 1820 (2008) is a landmark resolution and a vital complement to resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. The European Union views its effective implementation as pivotal.

Allow me to start by saying that the European Union commends the Secretary-General for his report on this urgent and important subject (S/2009/362). We encourage the Secretary-General to report annually to the Security Council on developments concerning the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008).

The General Assembly has recognized that sexual violence is a well-established method of torture and warfare. It is deeply dehumanizing and must be addressed at all levels, locally and internationally. The European Union condemns sexual violence in all its forms, including its use as a tool to advance political and military objectives. We call on leaders of all countries and organizations to take firm action to combat sexual violence.

The issue of conflict-related sexual violence has to be dealt with in a coordinated manner by the United Nations system. All branches of the United Nations should come together behind the vision that resolution 1820 (2008) proposed and that the Secretary-General's report echoes. Gaps in efforts need to be identified and addressed, and accountability must be established. The United Nations needs to develop a better capacity to gather information about cases of sexual violence and to address the needs of the victims.

The European Union takes note of the idea of appointing a senior representative with responsibility to integrate the United Nations response to conflict-related sexual violence. We would also welcome a follow-up mechanism on sexual violence, and we express our support for all efforts to create synergies among resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008) and 1612 (2005).

We need to improve the way in which we integrate women and gender aspects into broader humanitarian and peacemaking strategies. Women must be represented at every stage and level of peace negotiations. Civil society actors involved in women's issues should be consulted throughout those processes.

Peacekeeping missions can do more to address conflict-related sexual violence by supporting national efforts and by preparing themselves for the task in advance. Issues of sexual violence, gender equality and respect for human rights must be an integral part of the concept of operations for peacekeeping missions, including the predeployment training of peacekeepers.

There should be no alternative to a policy of zero tolerance on this issue. The sexual crimes currently being committed by parties in such situations as the conflicts in Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan are unacceptable. Sexual crimes committed by military personnel should fall under the jurisdiction of civilian courts.

Short-term measures to improve protection must be accompanied by long-term efforts to establish the rule of law. We must ensure that respect for human rights and gender justice is reflected in national legislation and upheld in practice. Much more can be done to ensure the effective implementation of Member States' commitments on this issue. Impunity for atrocities against civilian populations must end. Institutions must be built to bring perpetrators to justice and address discrimination against women and children. The European Union supports the development of a comprehensive United Nations strategy to combat impunity for sexual violence.

The European Union will continue to implement resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) by mainstreaming a gender-sensitive approach in all its policies and activities, especially those relating to crisis management and long-term development cooperation, and through targeted measures to protect and support women and children.

At a more general level, the European Union will integrate issues related to women and peace and security into its development strategies and its dialogue with partnership countries. A strong focus will be

placed on the rule of law and the responsibility to build effective, gender-sensitive justice systems. Such systems should aim to deliver justice to victims of sexual violence and help bring an end to impunity.

The Security Council and the General Assembly have recognized the destabilizing and dehumanizing effects of sexual violence. We, the Member States, recognize our obligations under international law to refrain from violating human rights and to protect our populations from such violence.

Backed by a consensus among Member States on the gravity of this matter, the Secretary-General's report provides us with a basis on which to move forward collectively on the issue of conflict-related sexual violence, through the United Nations. The European Union will be an active partner of the Organization in that endeavour.

Finally, with regard to another issue, let me add that the European Union welcomes resolution 1882 (2009) on children and armed conflict, which was adopted on Tuesday, 11 August. The resolution is an important step forward that will contribute to an improved situation for children worldwide.

The President: I now call on the representative of Israel.

Ms. Shalev (Israel): I too thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership in holding this very important meeting. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for honouring us with his presence this morning as we discuss the important issue of sexual violence in conflict areas.

As a sponsor of resolution 1820 (2008), Israel closely follows developments around the world concerning its implementation. Since the resolution's adoption last year, and in the nine years since the Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), we have seen some progress on issues concerning women, peace and security.

We welcome the increased deployment of gender advisers, the routine inclusion in peacekeeping mandates of provisions for the protection of women and girls from sexual violence, and the growing awareness of the need to include women in any peace process. While all those measures are steps forward, it is clear that we still have a very long way to go.

Israel welcomes the Secretary-General's initial report on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) (S/2009/362), which sets out a number of serious challenges facing the international community in addressing crimes of sexual violence. One example from the report conveys the scale of the problem: there have been a staggering 200,000 cases of sexual violence in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo since the outset of hostilities. Elsewhere, in one third of the cases tried before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, sexual violence was found to be part of a widespread and systematic attack against civilians.

The tactical use of sexual violence lies at the heart of resolution 1820 (2008), for, while rape and sexual violence are first and foremost crimes against individual women and girls, such acts are often designed to deliberately and systematically destroy the tenuous social fabric that exists during periods of conflict. The intention is to inflict suffering and instil fear. Families — and societies — bear the scars of these acts long after hostilities have ceased.

The use of sexual violence as a tool of war is surely a form of terrorism. Israel condemns it and strongly urges the Council to strengthen its tools for protecting women and girls. The Secretary-General's recent report points to a number of useful actions that Member States and the Organization can pursue. Israel supports the immediate deployment of a commission of inquiry to investigate crimes of sexual violence to several areas plagued by such crimes.

Israel also looks forward to the joint study by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on the protection of civilian mandates. We must ensure that mandates for peacekeeping missions in areas racked by sexual violence contain explicit and unambiguous provisions for the protection of civilians from such acts. Moreover, before the renewal of such mandates, there should be a candid assessment of results, with mandates or strategies revised as necessary.

Increasing the deployment of women and gender advisers would further increase the ability of missions to effectively protect civilians from sexual abuse. Regrettably, there have been accusations of sexual misconduct committed by United Nations personnel themselves. Whenever this occurs, the reputation of all peacekeepers may be tarnished. We must be certain

that all mission personnel have been properly trained in appropriate conduct, with transparent investigation of all allegations and swift prosecution of those who abuse their position of authority. The zero-tolerance policy must be strictly enforced.

In the spirit of resolution 1325 (2000), the Women's Equal Rights Law in Israel has been amended to mandate the inclusion of women in any group appointed to peacebuilding negotiations or working towards conflict resolution. Allow me to also share that, through Israel's international aid agency, my Government organizes programmes in women's leadership and capacity-building for women's non-governmental organizations. We believe that the skills learned in these programmes can make a real difference on the ground in post-conflict recovery.

The international community has been challenged. All States must, individually and collectively, answer this challenge. Israel pledges itself to this clear international consensus, and it extends its hand to any partner in this important endeavour. We are speaking not of statistics but of devastated lives, and we should commit ourselves to getting the job done. As you yourself, Sir, and Ambassador Rice mentioned earlier this morning, if ever there was the global resolve to do it, it is now.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Ms. Dunlop (Brazil): I thank you, Mr. President, for holding this open debate on women and peace and security. The gravity of the challenge posed by sexual violence against civilians in situations of armed conflict requires involving the whole membership in the discussion on ways to address the problem. I also thank the Secretary-General for his presence and his briefing.

The report before us today (S/2009/362) is deeply disturbing. The persistence of widespread or systematic rape and other forms of sexual abuse of civilians in armed conflict is simply unacceptable. As noted in that document, sexual violence is dehumanizing, inflicts intense mental and physical trauma, and is often accompanied by fear, shame and stigma. It can prolong conflict by creating a cycle of attack and counterattack, as also indicated in the report. This is all the more deplorable when perpetrators are officials, who must lead by example and fulfil clear legal and moral obligations.

Our collective indignation must go beyond statements and translate into concerted action by the international community. The several parts of the United Nations system must come together to address a problem that, although simple in its cruelty, is complex in its root causes and therefore demands a multisectoral approach.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict provide a clear framework for effective action. The General Assembly, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women together have done a lot and should continue their valuable work in a manner that is as coordinated as possible.

The principle of national ownership and the need for the active participation of civil society in this process cannot be overemphasized. In situations of armed conflict, where sexual violence is used or commissioned as a tactic of war in order to deliberately target civilians or as part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations, the Security Council has an important role to play.

The recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report deserve careful consideration, as they may help to prevent, monitor, report on and remedy instances of sexual violence. It is crucial that the proposed measures fully respect the functions and powers of the Security Council under the Charter and conform to the scope of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). In other words, the object of those measures must be widespread or systematic sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. In all other cases, the fight against this atrocity should be led by the relevant actors within the United Nations system.

Nevertheless, we must actively seek synergies and stimulate cooperation among all stakeholders. Information-gathering is a good example. My delegation supports the enhanced collection of data by peacekeeping missions on widespread or systematic sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. Such data should be shared with other relevant principal

organs, the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Commission on the Status of Women as appropriate, since it would help to ensure that international action is not merely punitive but transformative as well.

Widespread or systematic sexual violence in armed conflict should not be fought only by means of vigorous law enforcement, prosecution, military discipline or sanctions. If these measures are to be effective in the long run, they should be accompanied by serious efforts to address some of the causes of the problem, such as discrimination, prejudice, poor education, institutional fragility and lack of resources. We trust that, together, national Governments, the competent parts of the United Nations system and donors can achieve a lot in this area.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Brazil's political and practical commitment to international efforts to combat all forms of violence against women, especially sexual violence against women and girls. We also support the Council in its implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). My delegation hopes that this debate will lead to improved action by Member States and the United Nations as a whole.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mrs. Grau (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate on the subject of women and peace and security. We commend the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2009/362) on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) and for his recommendations.

Last year's adoption of resolution 1820 (2008) was a major achievement. The resolution focuses on sexual violence during and after conflicts, which is one of the three pillars of resolution 1325 (2000). The Secretary-General's report describes the measures taken by the international community to prevent and combat gender-based human rights violations. In this regard, Switzerland has supported various multilateral initiatives, such as the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict.

It is deplorable that sexual violence continues to be perpetrated on a widespread basis, in particular as a tactic of war. Women and girls are particularly at risk and represent the majority of victims. We urge the Security Council to call on all parties to armed conflict to strictly comply with their obligations under international law, in particular international humanitarian law. We call on the Council to use the instruments at its disposal, such as targeted sanctions and the mandates of peacekeeping operations, to combat sexual violence in armed conflict.

Switzerland supports the establishment of an appropriate mechanism within the Security Council. That would facilitate consideration and action in line with the measures taken by parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations under international law. In order to ensure a consistent approach, that mechanism should provide for interaction with the Security Council's Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and its informal expert group on the protection of civilians.

In that context, Switzerland welcomes the adoption three days ago of resolution 1882 (2009), on children and armed conflict. It makes sexual violence an additional criterion for listing parties to an armed conflict in the annexes of the Secretary-General's reports. That resolution is a major decision in strengthening the protection agenda of the Council. That is why my country decided to join in sponsoring it. However, it is regrettable that that protection formula no longer applies once the victims reach 18 years of age.

International law obliges States not only to refrain from committing violations. It also requires them to take concrete measures to protect individuals from sexual violence, bring to justice the perpetrators and provide reparations for the victims. Yet, the implementation of those measures remains weak. States should do more to reform their legal systems in order to bring perpetrators to justice and to protect victims and treat them with respect at hearings. The continued support of the international community is necessary to help States to develop and to strengthen their national capacities in that area.

In a broader context, today's debate emphasizes one key aspect of resolution 1325 (2000). For resolution 1820 (2008) to have a sustainable impact, an integrated approach must be adopted. Greater participation of women in peacekeeping missions would render the protection and support of victims of sexual violence more effective. It is also of great

importance for the prevention and combating of sexual violence that women be more often involved in peace processes as mediators, representatives of the parties to the conflict or civil society partners.

Consequently, with a view to the tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), I wish to highlight the importance of implementing resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) in tandem.

The President: Our last speaker for this morning's session of our meeting is the representative of South Africa, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): South Africa wishes to express its appreciation for the Secretary-General's briefing and welcomes his report, contained in document S/2009/362, on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008). Last year, we were a sponsor of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) because of our principled resolve resolutely to address sexual violence against women and girls in conflict-affected situations and to ensure more effective protection and assistance for survivors.

This first report of the Secretary-General, which addresses widespread and systematic sexual violence in armed conflicts, provides yet another opportunity for us to assess the concrete and specific efforts made in the implementation of both resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) and the role of the United Nations in such efforts.

We remain convinced that women are active agents of change and play a meaningful role in the recovery and reintegration of their families and communities. Women are central in promoting democracy, good governance and reconciliation and in building peace and development after the guns fall silent. Their participation should thus be promoted in the whole continuum of the resolution of conflicts, from early warning, mediation, peace talks and peacekeeping to post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding. The United Nations therefore should be encouraged to promote the effective participation of women in decision-making, peace talks and other processes towards the resolution of conflicts.

The present reality, though, is that women and girls are the first casualties of war. From the beginning of a war, women and girls are besieged not only by combatants and other armed elements, but also by new societal pressures and expectations brought about by the new conflict environments. Sexual violence in conflict areas is inextricably linked to gender inequality, and it is imperative that we strongly advocate for the equal participation and full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

In South Africa, August is Women's Month. During this month, we celebrate and commemorate the role of women in the struggle for a free, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa. Specifically, on 9 August we celebrate the heroic contribution of women in the struggle against the oppressive laws of the apartheid regime, marked by the march by women of all races to the Union Buildings 53 years ago. Our democratic Government has made big and serious strides in advancing the cause of the development of women. Furthermore, during this Women's Month, South Africa will strengthen its partnership in the 365 Days of Activism campaign for no violence against women and children. South Africa's legislative framework gives impetus to our international commitment to gender equality and our commitment to conflict management and resolution.

South Africa's ratification of Southern African Development Community, African Union and international gender mainstreaming instruments is a strong indicator of our country's commitment to gender equality in general and, in particular, to gender mainstreaming in conflict prevention, resolution and management and in post-conflict reconstruction and development.

Consistent with those efforts and in order to promote effective participation of women in peacekeeping, peacebuilding and security, the African Union has declared the period 2010 to 2020 as the African Women's Decade. It further committed that the organs of the African Union, the regional economic communities and member States should use the frameworks of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) to integrate their gender policies, programmes and activities on conflict resolution processes. It further calls for the creation of regional consultative platforms for information and knowledge exchange and harmonization of strategies.

Consequently, it is our view that United Nations Member States should develop enhanced policies and strategies for local ownership and implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), with the

objective of empowering women at various stages of conflict and its aftermath, as recommended in the Secretary-General's report. Related to that is the importance of ensuring that the institutional structures at the United Nations have the capacity to monitor implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). In that regard, South Africa would like to commend the establishment of the coordination group, which includes all relevant organizations and agencies, to pay special attention to those issues so that momentum is not lost. We also commend the Office of the Secretary-General for its global campaign "Unite to end violence against women".

Sexual violence is deeply dehumanizing and inflicts intense mental and physical trauma; victims always find it very difficult to easily disclose their experiences. The impunity associated with sexual violence is of great concern to my delegation. In that regard, urgent intervention is required that will prioritize the promotion of sound systems in the areas of transitional justice, the rule of law and reform of the judiciary so as to ensure that countries put an end to impunity and prosecute those accused of all forms of sexual violence and violence against women and children in armed conflicts.

My delegation advocates the strengthening of existing mechanisms in order to make them effective and credible and the investigation of sexual violence and crime in conflict situations, including reviewing the effectiveness of programmes and prevention strategies. South Africa supports the recommendations by the Secretary-General on the need to establish more and better data collection systems in order to enhance the understanding of various forms of sexual violence in conflict situations and their aftermath.

South Africa remains deeply concerned at the plight of children caught in armed conflict. We welcomed and associated ourselves with the adoption of Security Council resolution 1882 (2009) on 4 August 2009, which, in paragraph 3, requests the Secretary-General to expand the criteria of the triggers to "killing and maiming of children and/or rape and other sexual violence against children".

In conclusion, South Africa remains committed to the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). The international community has an obligation to ensure that the rights of women and children are protected, especially in conflict-affected areas. The equal and effective participation of women and their full involvement in decision-making and peace processes will contribute to the promotion and maintenance of peace and security. Only through the concerted efforts of all stakeholders, including the United Nations, can sexual violence against vulnerable groups be stopped.

The President: There are a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. I intend, with the concurrence of members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.6180 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6180th meeting

Friday, 7 August 2009, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Parham	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Heissel
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Somdah
	China	Mr. Pan Jingyu
	Costa Rica	Mr. Guillermet
	Croatia	Ms. Čačić
	France	Ms. Gasri
	Japan	Mr. Teruuchi
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Belkheir
	Mexico	Mr. Ochoa
	Russian Federation	Mr. Chernenko
	Turkey	Mrs. Bademli Angel
	Uganda	Mr. Mugoya
	United States of America	Ms. Phipps
	Viet Nam	Ms. Hoang Thi Thanh Nga

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) (S/2009/362)

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09-44986 (E)

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The meeting resumed at 3.10 p.m.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers, as my colleague Ambassador Sawers did this morning, to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Mrs. Schroderus-Fox (Finland): Finland fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union. Given the importance of our topic today, I want to add some further remarks on the Secretary-General's first-ever report on sexual violence (S/2009/362).

It is our firm conviction that we must all endorse the application of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) to their fullest extent. Conflict situations remain a severe threat to the lives of women and children as conflicts develop without front lines and violence erupts suddenly. Women and children, and sometimes men, are raped and sexually abused during and in the aftermath of armed conflicts.

A year ago, this Council took a major step forward by condemning the use of rape and other forms of sexual violence as a tactic of war in armed conflicts. The Council highlighted the link between safeguarding international peace and security and the struggle against sexual violence. The international community has begun to recognize the seriousness of this grave challenge to peace and security. The real test lies in translating resolution 1820 (2008) into working practices on the ground.

Systematic rape in conflict leaves devastating wounds on society for decades. It should be considered a weapon of war and, as such, an integral part of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. Reintegration compensation should not be processed if this tactic of war continues. This was one of the issues stressed at the women's leadership conference convened in Monrovia in March 2009 by the Presidents of the Republics of Liberia and Finland.

It is of the utmost importance that the victims of rape and sexual abuse have access to legal process and that perpetrators be prosecuted and convicted. We must end the impunity of perpetrators. As noted by the Secretary-General in his report, the strict enforcement of a policy of zero tolerance, both by national authorities and by all international actors engaged in humanitarian, crisis management and peacebuilding activities, is essential. The international community and the individual States concerned need to pursue ways to ensure adequate protection, health care and counselling for the victims.

We must also remember that women are not merely victims in conflicts; they are active agents in solving and ending conflicts and leading society through the healing process. We cannot afford to ignore their leadership, knowledge, capacities and commitment.

Women should be involved in decision-making processes at all levels. To make this a reality, more women must be in high-level positions in decision-making, both nationally and internationally. Involvement in negotiation processes must be based on true participation and the possibility of influencing negotiations.

Opportunities for women's participation should be a part of the earliest stages of planning and preparing a peacekeeping mission. Furthermore, the number of female civilian and military personnel in United Nations peacekeeping and political missions should be increased, especially in leadership positions. Women's engagement in peacebuilding and reconstruction through non-governmental organizations should receive greater support.

We must urgently put into practice the commitments of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). The Secretary-General's report gives valuable recommendations for action. We must give hope to all victims who suffer from these horrific crimes of war and make sure that we efficiently prevent violence and deliver justice.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Barriga (Liechtenstein): Mr. President, we would like to thank you for organizing today's debate on women and peace and security, an important topic on which we have seen significant institutional progress in recent years. Nevertheless, the relevant country-specific reports of the Secretary-General draw

a grim picture of the realities on the ground. We continue to witness the increasing victimization of civilians in armed conflicts and sexual violence since the adoption of resolution 1820 (2008). The number of such incidents has increased in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic.

We are therefore engaged in a timely debate, and we welcome the Secretary-General's report (S/2009/362) and the recommendations contained therein. We hope that this debate will take us a step further towards the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) within the United Nations system. We would also like to take this opportunity to emphasize that the use of sexual violence as a method of warfare to achieve military ends must be considered a matter of international peace and security.

The implementation of resolutions 1820 (2008) and 1325 (2000) is a complex and multisectoral undertaking. We must build on the lessons learned in connection with resolution 1325 (2000), with regard to both the participation and the protection agendas. Consequently, we support the creation of a specific capacity within the Secretariat to effectively contribute to the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) by coordinating the respective activities of the various actors in the United Nations system.

It is clear that acts of sexual violence cannot effectively be prevented without obtaining and analyzing the relevant data. Given the complex nature and sensitivity of data collection, we strongly support the Secretary-General's call for all United Nations actors to respect the ethical and safety standards of the World Health Organization for researching, measuring and collecting data on sexual violence. Such data should be systematically collected and analysed by highly qualified and trained United Nations staff. United Nations experts should work in close cooperation with other relevant bodies to develop better prevention strategies and support services for survivors.

Resolution 1820 (2008) also requires the Secretary-General to present proposals for the effective collection of information pertaining to the use of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. We also support the Secretary-General's recommendation on the immediate establishment of a commission of inquiry to investigate violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in certain ongoing conflicts. The proposed commission would report to the Security Council and be supported by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The goal would be to ensure accountability, bring the perpetrators of such crimes to justice and prevent the commission of similar crimes. The primary responsibility in this respect must lie with the State concerned, and the involvement of international mechanisms and institutions must occur only where national judiciaries are not available or unable to effectively combat impunity.

In this respect, the central role of the International Criminal Court (ICC) must also be taken into account. The ICC, which has already proven to have a preventive effect on the ground, plays a key role in the fight against impunity, in particular where States are unable or unwilling to prosecute acts of sexual violence that can also qualify as war crimes or as crimes against humanity.

Finally, we would like to add that we support the idea of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations initiating a pilot project, based on its successful child protection adviser system, to improve the United Nations response to sexual violence. Such advisers have proven to be extremely productive and effective.

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations could consider deploying women protection advisers who would document sexual violence and help survivors get better access to assistance and follow-up support and protection. These advisers would report back to the Department, as well as to other relevant United Nations and non-United Nations partners on the ground, and they would serve as focal points for information-sharing and coordination among all sectors. We believe that such a mechanism would be an important step towards implementation of resolution 1820 (2008).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Normandin (Canada) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Government of Canada, I wish to thank the United Kingdom presidency for having convened this open debate on Security Council resolution 1820 (2008), on sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. This debate is indeed timely at a time when

we are calling for further concerted action to combat and prevent sexual violence.

Canada, through the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, is pleased to support the presence of women officers from the United Nations police at this open debate. Their experiences and advice are invaluable as we advance our collective understanding of how interventions against sexual violence can be more effective. Their presence also highlights the critical importance of increasing the number of women officers in the field. This can empower women to come forward to report sexual violence, while at the same time presenting women in positions of authority and power, a key element in breaking the cycle of sexual violence.

I would like to draw attention to the round table held yesterday with those United Nations police officers. The round table usefully complemented today's open debate and sparked an enriching discussion about challenges and best practices in investigating sexual violence in conflict. It also highlighted the need for capacity-building for women police officers and the importance of their role in national police services.

Canada welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/362) and his commitment to ensure increased attention to sexual violence. The report provides important contributions towards improving our collective understanding of the issue. We would therefore like subsequent reports to contain more information from the field, including the response to the issue by the United Nations system and its missions.

Canada would very much welcome an annual report on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008). We also urge the Council to request that the next report include a proposal for a Security Council mechanism to consider and act on information concerning sexual violence. Monitoring and reporting mechanisms can provide the international community with the data it needs to effectively monitor and strengthen the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

(*spoke in English*)

Canada would also like to encourage the Security Council to give priority attention to the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report which address the establishment and renewal of mandates, the monitoring of resolutions and enforcement measures and sanctions.

We would like to express our strong interest in two additional proposals contained in the report: the proposal to establish a commission of inquiry to investigate and report on sexual violence and the proposal that all data on sexual violence be reviewed by an existing working group or groups. We would submit, however, that the creation of a dedicated working group may be a more effective response, and we urge the Council to consider that option. At a minimum, we must ensure that sexual violence perpetrated against adults as well as children is included in the Council's considerations. Ultimately, we would like to see the Council adopt structural and lasting initiatives that will make a real difference to those targeted by sexual violence.

We would also like to raise the issue of bringing violators to justice. An important step forward in that direction was taken by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The Special Court, as members may remember, was the first to pronounce convictions on the charge of sexual slavery and on the crime of forced marriage as a crime against humanity.

In that regard, Canada would like to stress the following. Amnesty clauses within peace accords which can be interpreted as exempting perpetrators of sexual violence from being held accountable directly contravene resolution 1820 (2008) as well as many other previous international commitments. We are deeply dismayed by the failure to implement fully this essential element of 1820 (2008) during the year since its adoption.

We also emphasize the importance of the establishment by States of vetting mechanisms to exclude perpetrators of sexual violence from armed forces, where credible allegations supported by evidence have been brought against those perpetrators.

In conclusion, the Secretary-General's report contains a number of important recommendations that would strengthen the international response to sexual violence in conflict situations, and those recommendations warrant serious consideration. Security Council members may rest assured that Canada remains committed to actively supporting the Council in its efforts to combat sexual violence in conflict-affected situations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Papua New Guinea.

Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States represented at the United Nations, namely the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Tonga, Vanuatu and my own country, Papua New Guinea.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the United Kingdom on its assumption of the presidency and on presiding over this debate on the subject of women and peace and security. I would also like acknowledge the Secretary-General's recent report (S/2009/362) on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008).

Resolution 1820 (2008) builds on resolution 1325 (2000). It has compelled the international community to finally recognize sexual violence committed during conflict situations as a crime punishable by law. Sexual and gender-based violence is no longer a by-product of war and conflict. It can no longer be seen as collateral damage of war. We, the international community, have decided that enough is enough, that sexual violence in war and conflicts is intolerable and that the practice must be prevented at all costs.

We commend the Security Council and the Secretary-General for engaging in high-level diplomacy and advocacy. The recent developments in integrating the issue of sexual and gender-based violence into the peace process in countries such as, for example, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, are a strong step forward for the Security Council. The Council has communicated to the leaders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to the global community at large that sexual and gender-based violence in times of conflict is intolerable. We commend the Council for providing assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in monitoring incidents of gender-based violence.

Furthermore, we are also encouraged that the issue of sexual and gender-based violence has now become an integral element of the Council's assessment and evaluation of peacekeeping missions, increasing the legitimacy and accountability of peacekeeping troops.

We commend the Secretary-General's concerted effort to promote a more coordinated and systematic approach towards gender-based violence. We also commend the work implemented by the recent United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict initiative. United Nations Action unites the work of 12 United Nations entities with the goal of ending sexual and gender-based violence in conflicts. It takes a holistic approach to sexual violence in conflict by coordinating the efforts and work carried out by individual United Nations agencies on the matter. Such systemic coordination and cooperation improve accountability, amplify programming and advocacy, and increase support for national efforts in the prevention of sexual gender-based violence.

United Nations Action takes the following actions to attain the objectives of resolution 1820 (2008), which we recommend to the global community. At the country level, it supports joint strategy development and programming by United Nations country teams and peacekeeping operations, including building operational and technical capacity. In the area of advocacy among the public at large, it takes action to raise public awareness and generate the political will to address sexual violence as part of a broader campaign to stop rape now. Through learning by doing, which is important to many of us, it creates a hub of knowledge on the scale of sexual violence in conflict and on effective responses by the United Nations and its partners.

We believe that more can be done to fully attain the objectives outlined in resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). Currently, there are a few outstanding issues that should be further addressed. They include the need to strengthen and coordinate a systematic approach by international organizations, including the need to strengthen the coordination of regional organizations and mechanisms in dealing with sexual-based violence in conflict situations. We also believe that there is a need to strengthen national priorities, legal frameworks, personnel training and public advocacy to exterminate the practice of sexual-based violence. Finally, we believe that there is a need to increase the participation of women in conflict resolution, peace negotiation, peacekeeping troops and the rebuilding and reintegration of soldiers and communities.

Recently, Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro, in her address to the Security Council in April

this year on United Nations support for advancing the national implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), put forth a practical framework involving the "three Ps": protection, participation and prevention in developing national action plans. We believe that the three Ps provide a broad and practical framework that can also be applied to Security Council resolution 1820 (2008). Allow me to briefly highlight some of the relevant aspects of the three Ps.

In the area of protection, we recognize the need to strengthen our collective determination to treat rape and sexual assault in conflict situations with the same determination as that with which we address any other factors of war. One of the obstacles preventing the full implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) is the tendency of Governments and military personnel to treat gender-based violence as a by-product of war, not as a crime.

We believe that there is an ad hoc approach to women's security in times of conflict. Until recently, gender-based violence was often an afterthought following the occurrence of conflict. There is a need to protect women and children by building protection policies into national security strategies, legislation and peace negotiations.

Secondly, with regard to protection, we believe that there is a need to establish a firm and clear international norm when it comes to the prosecution of crimes involving gender-based violence in times of conflict. Perpetrators cannot go unpunished. The United Nations system and the Security Council must strengthen their resolve to collect evidence-based data to support accounts of sexual gender-based violence. Deployed soldiers and peacekeepers need to be properly trained and debriefed.

As far as participation is concerned, we believe that we need to encourage women's engagement in conflict resolution and prevention and in the negotiation of peace agreements, as their participation greatly increases the prospects for sustaining peace during times of conflict. Engaging women in post-conflict dialogue and policies will ensure their participation in creating a system-wide effort that includes results-based monitoring and social provisions.

We believe that there is a direct link between poverty and security. In countries with high rates of sexual gender-based violence, the economic capacities of women are often diminished. In many developing nations, the traditional role of women and their relationship to land make them important contributors to food production and economic growth. And it has been recognized that the economic empowerment of women is an effective way to combat sexual gender-based violence. However, we find that the current United Nations programmes are unsustainable and often being cut short when funding is depleted. We in the Pacific in particular would therefore like to encourage the United Nations to invest more resources and to strengthen existing agencies in order to promote the link between women's economic empowerment and security.

Pacific leaders are committed to the eradication of sexual gender-based violence. In June this year, the Pacific Islands Forum Regional Security Committee discussed the issue of gender-based violence and reaffirmed that sexual gender-based violence is a growing and serious concern and requires concerted national and regional response. Just this week, at the fortieth Pacific Islands Forum group meeting held in Australia, our leaders, together with those of Australia and New Zealand, reaffirmed their commitment to eliminating sexual gender-based violence. The Forum communiqué acknowledged sexual gender-based violence as a threat to human security in the region. The leaders welcome collaborative efforts at the local, national and regional levels to address the issue and would like to increase their engagement with global initiatives to address the issue.

Following are some examples of the initiatives taken in our region. In Vanuatu, a Family protection act has been enacted; in my own country, there have been many advances in the legal arena, such as through the establishment of a family sexual violence unit; and in Solomon Islands, a sexual assault unit and a family violence unit have been established.

Finally, Pacific Islands such as Fiji, Vanuatu, Samoa and Palau have volunteered their soldiers and police in support of Security Council peacekeeping missions. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our support for the Council's initiative in making the elimination of sexual gender-based violence an integral part of peacekeeping.

The President: I now all on the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Allow me at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate. My delegation also thanks the Secretary-General for his briefing this morning.

It is superfluous to say that women suffer most as victims of conflict. Even in peace processes, they are deprived of their due dividends. Women and girls are often viewed as bearers of cultural identities. Thus, they become prime targets. It is therefore essential that the Security Council devote serious attention to the issue of women and peace and security. We recall that Bangladesh, when it was a member of the Council, was closely associated with the adoption of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000). It is a document that applies not only to States, but to all actors involved in post-conflict peace processes.

Unfortunately, even nine years after the resolution's adoption, an increasing and alarming number of women and girls are becoming victims of violence. We are aware that poverty, the struggle for resources and socio-economic injustice lie at the heart of conflicts. The impact of this situation not only affects the safety and security of women, but also impairs the political, economic and overall security conditions of the relevant nations.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/362) pursuant to Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) provides us with disturbing information on violence against women. The adoption of resolution 1820 (2008) no doubt helped to draw global attention to the issue, but an effective plan of action involving the United Nations system, national and international actors, civil society, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders should follow in order to curb such violence. My delegation finds merit in the conclusions and recommendations set out in the report, and we look forward to engaging with other Member States in working on them. My delegation also stresses the need for appropriate training programmes for the peacekeeping personnel deployed by the United Nations.

On a number of occasions, my delegation has underlined the importance of availability of relevant data in analysing the plight of women and girls who are victims of conflicts. Focused examination of such data is important to the formulation of policy guidelines and to undertaking preventive measures. The sharing of experiences and lessons learned on a regular basis is useful in guiding policy measures. We note with appreciation that this point has been reflected in the Secretary-General's report.

While we stress the need for concrete actions to protect women from violence, we believe that substantial progress should be made in the area of prosecution. Precedent shows that perpetrators get away with crimes because of lengthy and complicated judicial processes. We feel that all concerned should facilitate the establishment of effective judicial systems. Moreover, measures should be taken to address the psychosocial needs of the victims.

As one of the major troop- and police-contributing countries, Bangladesh emphasizes the importance of the effective implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), as well as all relevant General Assembly resolutions, particularly 61/143 and 63/155. We wish to reiterate that there should be adequate representation of women at all levels of decision-making in conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation.

It is reassuring that multidimensional peacekeeping operations have such great potential to address the security of women. Troop- and police-contributing countries should continue to increase the number of uniformed and civilian female personnel. At present, only 8 per cent of all United Nations police officers are female; this number was 4 per cent in 2006. The number of women from Bangladesh in peacekeeping is set to increase in the coming days in order to ensure gender balance in our share of the deployment.

It is essential to make women's voices heard. Women's participation is necessary in the decision-making process in any post-conflict country. Emphasis should be placed on the electoral process in post-conflict environments in order to increase the participation of women as voters, candidates and electoral officials.

A critical factor in the successful implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) is high-level commitment and accountability in administration, without which policy guidelines are of little use. We believe that the protection of women and girls from gender-based violence is a primary responsibility. There should be zero tolerance with respect to the perpetrators, and impunity must be ended. It is therefore crucial to mobilize leadership, ensure

accountability, provide adequate resources, identify challenges and address the root causes in protecting women and girls.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Ney (Germany): Germany welcomes this open thematic debate on women and peace and security. I would like to express Germany's appreciation to you, Mr. President, for this important initiative.

Germany aligns itself with the declaration made by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union, and would like to add the following remarks.

We congratulate the Secretary-General on his report (S/2009/362) pursuant to resolution 1820 (2008), which we are discussing today and which Germany is pleased to have supported. The report contains compelling evidence that sexual violence in situations of armed conflict is indeed not only a serious human rights and humanitarian concern, but also a security problem requiring a systematic security response, including through attention by the Security Council and the International Criminal Court. As the report rightly states, in bringing together available data, no matter how incomplete, the report shows a disturbing picture of the use of sexual violence against civilians in armed conflicts and their aftermath.

Much still needs to be done by Member States in order to ensure a more timely and efficient response to these challenges. In this regard, Germany supports the proposal for the establishment of a commission of inquiry. We also reiterate our support for an appropriate follow-up mechanism of the Security Council. Both proposals would allow the Council to better fulfil its mandate. We welcome the efforts made by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations membership to integrate the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) into the ongoing New Horizon debate on the reform of peacekeeping missions.

The report also contains a wealth of information on what the United Nations is already doing in order to combat sexual violence. We commend all United Nations entities on their extremely important work and encourage them to further intensify their efforts. Given the fact that the issue of conflict-related sexual violence is already being addressed by so many actors in the United Nations system, it could provide an excellent test case for a more structured and integrated approach by the United Nations to a specific problem. However, as in other areas relating to the field of gender equality and the empowerment of women, a strong driver is currently missing.

Germany hopes that the negotiations on the establishment of a new United Nations gender entity will soon create those necessary structures. In this context, we would like to point out that any new gender architecture must also be responsive to the special mandates under resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): Australia very much values this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to tackling sexual violence in conflict. As a sponsor of resolution 1820 (2008), we very strongly support the Council's focus on this compelling challenge.

Australia recognizes the important links between sexual violence, social violence and the role of peacebuilding activities in preventing violence. We have been a strong supporter of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security since its adoption nine years ago. That resolution, of course, provided the basis for women to play a greater role in all peace processes and peacebuilding activities, and urged all of us to undertake proactive strategies to promote, cultivate, develop, encourage and sustain individuals, communities and nations to integrally practice peace. Resolution 1820 (2008), of course, grew out of the decisive resolution 1325 (2000), and we would urge all nations to undertake all actions to implement it and to ensure that it is carried out within that broader context.

Specifically in regard to the Secretary-General's report, we welcome his recommendations on operationalizing resolution 1820 (2008) within the United Nations in a systematic, structural and lasting way, including by ensuring appropriate references in mandate creation and renewal processes. Utilizing effectively this Council's most recent aide memoire on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, which includes provisions on sexual violence, will also be crucial.

Now is the time to get things done. One good example of practical United Nations action is in Timor-Leste, where the National Vulnerable Persons Unit of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste is successfully training local police on gender-based violence and policing responsibilities.

We welcome the Secretary-General's advice that he is considering the appointment of a senior person to address the prevention of and response to sexual violence across the United Nations system. We would support such an appointment. Australia considers an appointment with an operational mandate to be an appropriate way to build on the current work of the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict.

We note the Secretary-General's recommendation that a commission of inquiry on sexual violence in Chad, the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo be established. Any such process must result in tangible outcomes. Impunity for sexual violence cannot be tolerated. We think that the Council must be prepared to act on any evidence collected by such a process to ensure accountability.

We are concerned — not exclusively, but particularly — about the high level of reported sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are also concerned about the reported discrimination against the minority Muslim population in Myanmar and its vulnerability to sexual violence, as well as the high level of sexual violence perpetrated by the armed forces against rural women from other ethnic groups. We call on Myanmar to ensure that its agents cease perpetrating sexual violence against civilians.

Australia itself is actively pursuing a range of practical initiatives to combat the prevalence of sexual violence in conflict. We are pleased to support the efforts of United Nations action on its *Analytical Inventory of Responses by Peacekeeping Personnel to War-Related Violence against Women*, which will be launched this year. That very practical tool will provide valuable guidance to peacekeeping personnel on the ground. We are pleased to support the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the United Nations Development Programme in their initiative in conducting a joint research project to provide guidance on how this Council's resolutions on women and peace and security can be implemented to reduce the high levels of sexual violence throughout the Pacific. That includes in Solomon Islands, where Australia, with many others, is involved with partners in a regional peacekeeping mission. In Solomon Islands, Australian federal police officers are working alongside local police to develop their capacity to respond to sexual violence.

As the representative of Papua New Guinea has just observed, the communiqué issued yesterday in Cairns, Australia, by the 16 leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum took an important step towards addressing sexual and gender-based violence, which is endemic throughout the Pacific. Leaders acknowledged the potential destabilizing effects of that significant issue on communities and societies, undertook to firmly establish it on domestic political agendas and committed to its eradication and to ensuring that all individuals have equal access to justice. Those steps reaffirm the commitment of all Pacific leaders to combat sexual and gender-based violence.

There is a range of other activities, of course, that we and others in our region are involved with, which we list in our distributed statement.

To conclude, in 2008, this Council, through its adoption of resolution 1820 (2008), finally recognized that sexual violence was a calculated aspect of conflicts threatening regional and international peace and security that had to be addressed, and had to be addressed very specifically. One year on, the commitment of all Member States is still required — very much required — to translate that understanding into practice. We must all, Australia included, remain firmly dedicated to that goal.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Cornado (Italy): Italy fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Sweden as President of the European Union. I will therefore limit myself to a few additional remarks.

I would like first to commend you, Mr. President, for having convened this important debate. The adoption of resolution 1820 (2008) a little more than year ago was a historic achievement of this Council, clearly stating that sexual violence, when used as a weapon of war, not only is a heinous violation of human rights, and possibly a war crime or a crime against humanity, but also endangers international peace and security.

Italy is proud of having been one of the sponsors of resolution 1820 (2008) and of having substantially contributed to its drafting. For us, its implementation, as well as that of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, is a key priority in the foreign and security policies of my country. For that reason, my Government has started the process of drafting a national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and is constantly and actively engaged in all United Nations forums that deal with the advancement of women.

Italy is also organizing, in the framework of its G-8 presidency, an international conference on violence against women that will take place in Rome on 9 and 10 September 2009. The conference will tackle all aspects of gender-based violence, including sexual violence in armed conflict, with the aim of focusing the attention of the international community on a global issue that affects all countries of the world. The event will see the participation of representatives of several Governments from all over the world, international organizations and civil society, and intellectuals and global advocates.

Today's debate shows once again the commitment of the international community and the Security Council to putting an end to those unspeakable crimes. We are on the right track. The adoption last Tuesday of resolution 1882 (2009), extending to rape and sexual violence the criteria for the inclusion of parties to armed conflict in the annexes of the reports of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, is yet another concrete step in the right direction. Italy co-sponsored that resolution, and commends Mexico and the other Council members for that important achievement, which will allow the Council to protect children affected by armed conflict.

Yet, it is clear to all of us that more needs to be done and that the measure of our success will be the difference that we can make on the ground by effectively protecting women and girls from sexual violence, holding accountable those responsible for those crimes, putting an end to impunity, helping the victims and empowering women within their societies.

In that framework, we read with attention the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/362) pursuant to resolution 1820 (2008), which is a useful first step to increase the capacities of Member States and of the United Nations to respond to sexual violence in armed conflicts.

We support the Secretary-General's recommendations. We believe that our first priority must be to ensure accountability. The establishment of a commission of inquiry to investigate and report on human rights and humanitarian violations leading to sexual violence in Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan and to recommend to the Council the most effective mechanisms to fight impunity in those situations is undoubtedly a proposal that could lead to tangible progress on the ground.

Still, as resolution 1820 (2008) points out and as clearly emerged from today's debate, the challenge before us is global in scope and not limited to certain situations. We must provide ourselves with the appropriate tools to face the challenge both in single-priority situations and at the general, more global level.

We therefore support the proposal that the Secretary-General issue an annual report on this topic, and we hope that future reports will include detailed and verified information, publicly listing those parties to armed conflicts responsible for acts of rape and sexual violence in violation of international law.

The progress obtained through the annual report on children and armed conflict shows that information is the first step towards real accountability within the international community. We realize that it will not be an easy task and that the United Nations system, and particularly its missions on the ground, will need more resources, stronger capacities and better coordination. Still, we are convinced that this is something that needs to be done without delay and, equally, that the Council will then need to act upon the information that it receives with all its instruments, including sanctions committees.

Finally, we are convinced that it is now time to have a global advocate for the implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), acting as a focal point both of the United Nations system and of Member States. We would therefore favour the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General for women and peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Park In-kook (Republic of Korea): I appreciate your special effort, Mr. President, to

convene this open debate on women and peace and security, focusing on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008), which was adopted unanimously and enjoyed a large number of sponsors, including the Republic of Korea.

My delegation appreciates the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/362) pursuant to Security Council resolution 1820 (2008). We concur with the analysis contained in the Secretary-General's report and support its recommendations.

The Republic of Korea welcomes some progress made by the States and parties concerned in their efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence, especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, the Sudan, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.

Despite that progress, the overall situation with regard to sexual violence in armed conflict remains of serious concern. In many parts of the world, State and non-State actors alike continue to commit violations with impunity. As the Secretary-General's report points out, mainly three factors, among others, have contributed to and exacerbated sexual violence.

My delegation would like to lend a strong voice to urging civilian and military leaders to demonstrate the commitment and political willingness to combat sexual violence. All commitments and pledges must be matched by action. In most situations of armed conflict, access to key medical, psychological and socio-economic reintegration services is inadequate and limited. Parties to conflict have a legal obligation under international humanitarian law to protect and meet the basic needs of persons within their control. In situations where they are unwilling or unable to do so, they must allow and facilitate the work of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in providing critical life-saving humanitarian assistance, including to victims of sexual violence.

The United Nations has a critical role to play in assisting States in preventing sexual violence, protecting individuals from such violence, and punishing perpetrators while providing remedy to victims. Currently, the United Nations system is taking action across its main areas of work. Among these various activities, my delegation particularly appreciates and supports the strong advocacy campaign and deliver-as-one efforts made under the robust leadership of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. We also recognize that many efforts have been made at Headquarters and the field level, such as the adoption by the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict of its strategic framework for the period 2009-2010; the cluster approach to humanitarian assistance led by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF; and the Peacebuilding Commission's support to States in responding to sexual violence.

My delegation would like to highlight some areas in which the United Nations system should redouble its efforts in order to adequately address sexual violence in armed conflict.

First, there should be more coherence between peacekeeping missions and United Nations country teams to ensure joint priorities in preventing and responding to sexual violence. Furthermore, peacekeeping missions, country teams and Governments should actively explore developing a joint Government-United Nations programme on sexual violence, as has been done in Liberia.

Secondly, in the humanitarian field, further coordinated action is required. The cluster approach on a cross-sectoral basis is the right approach. Under protection clusters, UNFPA and UNICEF are co-leading the gender-based violence area of responsibility. The key is the capacity of each sub-cluster and whether it has enough expertise and capacity to deal with sexual violence and coordinate within the sub-cluster, as well as with other clusters. As such, the strengthening and consolidation of cluster capacity are urgently needed.

Thirdly, the importance of the determined role of peacekeeping missions in addressing sexual violence cannot be overstated. In this regard, we encourage special envoys and representatives to pay greater attention to the issue of sexual violence. Gender guidelines should be provided as soon as possible to military personnel in peacekeeping operations in order to effectively implement resolution 1820 (2008).

Fourthly, there is gross underreporting of cases due to fear, shame or stigma, while gathering comprehensive information is complex in and of itself. In order to improve data collection, clear guidance and support should be given to peacekeeping missions and United Nations country teams. In fact, United Nations agencies and organizations providing services to survivors could be an effective tool for gathering data. United Nations actors engaged in data collection

should be familiar with and respect the ethical and safety standards of the World Health Organization for data collection on sexual violence. An additional contribution to data collection could be made by the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflicts, who has benefited from the recently strengthened mechanism of resolution 1612 (2005) on children and armed conflict. This type of close cooperation is to be encouraged in order to ensure that resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1820 (2008) are implemented in a mutually reinforcing manner.

Fifthly, the United Nations system needs a driver dedicated to the issue of women in armed conflict, taking responsibility across the United Nations system to reinforce, support and help drive existing United Nations efforts forward to address the needs and interests of women in conflict-affected situations. This is particularly necessary to prevent and respond to the use of sexual violence, as well as to streamline organizational initiatives. Of course, we will have a strong driver on women's issues that can play such a role once we establish a stronger gender architecture, such as the composite entity. We sincerely hope that such an agreement is made at the current session in order to honour our commitment to women throughout the world. However, even if we successfully reach a consensus on this issue, it will take time to move the agreement into full operational mode. We simply cannot wait until then to have a senior figure who can attend, with authority and focus across the United Nations system, to the urgent issue of sexual violence.

Finally, we support the suggestion that the Secretary-General request a follow-up report with a proposal for a mechanism to act against parties to armed conflict who do not comply with their obligations under international law and against the perpetrators of sexual violence.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to urge the General Assembly to take a substantive decision on the establishment of a new, strong composite entity on gender that can guide and assist the United Nations system and Member States in effectively implementing their commitment to women, including their obligations under Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security.

The Republic of Korea looks forward to a concrete outcome based on our discussion today and in the future with a view to ending grave sexual violence in armed conflict. We are fully committed to ensuring the realization of the United Nations promise to women in armed conflict.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Ecuador.

Mr. Morejón (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to thank you, Sir, for convening this important meeting to address a critical item on the international agenda.

Ecuador believes that the United Nations has a fundamental role to play in combating all forms of discrimination and violence against women. My country is therefore firmly resolved to continue to support and strengthen that work, and calls on the international community to pool its efforts to that end. Ecuador has demonstrated its commitment by ratifying all relevant international treaties and by co-sponsoring various resolutions of the General Assembly on this important and sensitive question.

The Security Council has made a significant contribution in its own area of competence by adopting a number of resolutions on the protection of civilians, in particular children and women, in armed conflict, including resolution 1325 (2000), which refers to sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. On 19 June 2008, the Council also adopted resolution 1820 (2008) stressing the important role of women in conflict prevention and resolution and peacekeeping, as well as the need to include the gender perspective in peacekeeping operations, and condemning all forms of gender-based violence, in particular rape and sexual violence.

Ecuador has taken due note of the first report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/362) pursuant to resolution 1820 (2008). The report highlights the numerous efforts of States to eradicate that scourge. My country believes that, notwithstanding the strenuous efforts of the Secretary-General and the Security Council, it is urgent to establish greater cooperation among the main organs of the United Nations, taking into account the fact that the General Assembly is the universal entity responsible for establishing the normative framework that guides the decisions of all States. Moreover, my delegation believes that the General Assembly should consider the subject of sexual violence, including when it is perpetrated during armed conflict, systematically and regularly, as it has done during previous sessions with

the consensus adoption of a number of resolutions on working to eliminate rape and other forms of sexual violence in all their manifestations.

Ecuador believes that a financially and operationally strengthened gender entity would help eradicate the scourge. We call upon States to continue to pursue the goals of United Nations system-wide coherence, which would enhance the Organization's effectiveness and efficiency in the field.

A topic as sensitive as the one we are discussing today, which should be a matter of concern for all countries, deserves broad and systematic consideration by the entire membership. The international community should join its forces to establish mechanisms that would provide comprehensive assistance to victims of this scourge and coordinate efforts to punish perpetrators.

I wish in conclusion to reaffirm the determination of the Government and the people of Ecuador to continue to work together with the rest of the international community to eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls, in particular sexual violence, in every country and every region of our planet.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): I extend the gratitude of the Nigerian delegation to you, Mr. President, for convening this crucial meeting on women and peace and security. I thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his lucid and concise introductory statement on his report (S/2009/362), which sets out several thought-provoking ideas, assessments and recommendations.

Today's deliberations reaffirm our sense of urgency on the issue of sexual violence against women and girls. My delegation is concerned that in spite of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), which provided hope for millions of women and young girls, the crime of rape and sexual violence has not only increased but has become a tactic and weapon of war. Indeed, it has become systematic and widespread, and it remains largely unpunished.

Nonetheless, I share the optimism and hope that, with our collective will and support, we can bring an end to that impunity and to these crimes against humanity. It is in this regard that my delegation appreciates the recommendations of the Secretary-General, particularly on establishing mechanisms of accountability, ensuring that peacekeeping mandates address sexual violence and providing regular annual reporting on gender-based violence. Those concrete proposals would complement and strengthen the implementation of the largely unfulfilled commitments made by Member States in resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). With respect to fulfilling those commitments, I would like to make the following observations.

First, there is need to tenaciously uphold the zero-tolerance policy, which calls for an end to impunity in post-conflict situations. This can be achieved through promoting efforts and programmes for transitional gender justice, provided through mechanisms such as the International Criminal Court, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the Special Courts. Member States should support the work of those mechanisms in order to promote justice for women survivors. Seeking justice for survivors and punishing the perpetrators conveys an unequivocal message about our commitment to accountability and responsibility.

Secondly, it is crucial that support programmes for survivors emphasize income generating, food security and protection schemes that would enable them to restart their lives.

Thirdly, the Secretary-General's request for more women troops deployed to conflict zones should elicit a renewed response from Member States. It is common knowledge that the Indian all-female police unit has recorded some positive results in Liberia, restoring confidence and self-esteem in Liberian women, some of who are now enlisting in the armed forces.

Fourthly, it is imperative to provide adequate and appropriate training to peacekeepers on dealing with human rights violations and on strategies to address gender-based violence. Such specialized training should encompass members of the military, police, judiciary, civil society, women and gender advocates. It will provide the skill set required to identify and address issues relating to sexual violence and other crimes against humanity.

Fifthly, we invite the Secretary-General to utilize existing regional and subregional resources, such as the African Peace and Security Architecture and the early

warning system of the Economic Community of West African States, to strengthen efforts to protect women in situations of conflict on the continent.

As one of the largest troop- and police-contributing countries, Nigeria remains ready to contribute to peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. The Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, with support from the United States Government and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, has established a model peacekeeping training centre in Jaji, Kaduna, early this year. The centre, which is headed by a senior military officer with extensive peacekeeping and training experience, is designed to improve and enhance the skills of Nigerian troops in relation to managing post-conflict reconstruction, human rights violations and gender awareness in peacekeeping environments. We will continue to provide the Council with updates on best practices and progress.

Once again, we thank the United Kingdom delegation for initiating this dialogue and for introducing a very useful draft resolution.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. Argüello (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me begin by thanking the United Kingdom presidency for having convened this open debate, which reflects the Security Council's commitment to effectively follow up and implement resolution 1820 (2008) nearly a year after its adoption.

There must be a firm response to the continued use of sexual violence in its various forms against civilians, in particular women and girls, in conflict and post-conflict situations. We must put an end to impunity and protect the victims in all situations where the United Nations is present.

Consonant with my country's firm commitment to combat gender-based violence, the Argentine national congress, in March, adopted a comprehensive protection law to prevent, punish and eliminate violence against women wherever they interact with others. This encompasses sexual violence, including rape, in all contexts, such as marriage, other relationships and family situations — both with and without cohabitation — as well as forced prostitution, exploitation, slavery, harassment, sexual abuse or trafficking.

With respect to the training of Argentine troops, including those participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations, I wish to emphasize that throughout the process of selecting personnel for deployment consideration is given to the Code of Conduct for peacekeepers, including the provisions related to gender and sexual exploitation and abuse, which encompass the provisions and concepts set out in resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

Similarly, those two resolutions underpin the work of the Argentine centre for joint peacekeeping training, which for four years has been training troops for United Nations deployment. I stress that the national training centre is firmly committed to international standards of human rights protection, in particular gender issues in peacekeeping operations, as well as to the Code of Conduct and measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. We also stress full and equal participation of men and women in all initiatives for peace during all stages of armed conflict, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Implementation of the two resolutions, the content of United Nations reports and our own lessons learned are systematically incorporated into the centre's gender curriculum.

It is part of our training mission to make these documents and resolutions known; moreover, all staff know the applicable law and the conduct that the United Nations expects from its peacekeepers in this sphere. Specific courses are offered following the United Nations Standardized Generic Training Modules. And at present the training institute is completely updating its entire curriculum in accordance with the new United Nations training module, the Core Pre-Deployment Training Materials.

Furthermore, a follow-up system is in place through interviews and surveys that serve as guide and support for national policies, and we are planning an auditing system for monitoring the progress of gender mainstreaming.

As to the punishment contemplated in the eventuality of an Argentine military personnel member deployed in a peacekeeping operation being involved in a case of sexual violence, disciplinary measures are applied immediately within the unit deployed in the theatre of operations. This results in the return to our country of the person in question and the continuation of disciplinary action in Argentina. This can involve very severe punishment, including discharge. We

should also note that as of today, after 51 years of an uninterrupted Argentine military presence in many United Nations peacekeeping operations, there has been no recorded case of sexual violence or abuse in connection with Argentina's participation in peacekeeping missions.

We continue to receive reports from the field on the use of sexual violence as a political or military weapon in some current conflicts. Sexual violence is categorically prohibited as a method of war. The widespread and systematic use of sexual violence is a grave violation of international law, as enshrined in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and in the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. This was prominent in the context of the first case to be tried before the Court, which leads us to reflect not only on how widespread this aberrant practice is in conflict, but also on the importance of effective penalties in putting an end to impunity and preventing such situations from recurring in the future.

Bearing in mind these realities, Argentina is convinced that effective measures must be adopted as a matter of urgency to prevent and respond to acts of sexual violence against the civilian population. This would make a significant contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Argentina hopes that the decisions that the Council will adopt in this area will strongly incorporate two lines of thought: protection for the full human rights of victims and an end to impunity for the perpetrators. In that connection, we are grateful for the conclusions and recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General, which we support. We hope that the Council will take specific measures in a future resolution to ensure that in the renewal of every peacekeeping mandate these situations be considered and that effective mechanisms will be put in place to provide leadership and coherence in the response and ensure a solid basis for future Council action at all levels, including information gathering, awareness, technical analysis of options and best practices.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. De Klerk (Netherlands): Let me express our sincere appreciation to the United Kingdom for marking this first anniversary of the adoption by the Council of resolution 1820 (2008), on sexual violence in conflict, by holding an open debate in which the United Nations membership has the opportunity to address a subject which deserves the full attention of all States Members of the United Nations.

I would first like to align myself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union.

The Netherlands applauded the unanimous adoption of resolution 1820 (2008) by the Council last year. During that open debate (see S/PV.5916), I expressed our hope that a report of the Secretary-General would initiate a process to ensure adequate follow-up by the Council and would address ways to improve coordination of United Nations activities on the ground. I also emphasized the importance of finding ways to monitor the actions taken by parties to a conflict to fulfil their responsibilities.

One year after the adoption of resolution 1820 (2008) and almost nine years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we have to conclude that we need to intensify our efforts to end sexual violence by ensuring real, concrete follow-up to these resolutions.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2009/362) rightly states that it is up to Member States, the United Nations system and civil society to rise to the challenge. After finalizing a national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000) one and a half years ago, the Dutch Ministries for Foreign Affairs, Defence and the Interior and 15 civil society organizations are working, nationally and internationally, to achieve our common goals, such as ensuring that a gender perspective is well integrated in the work of the armed forces, improving access to justice for victims of sexual violence, creating zero-tolerance communities and increasing the active role of women in State-building in countries such as Afghanistan, Burundi, the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We commend the important work of United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict in the field and recognize the ongoing efforts of the United Nations system as a whole to improve coordination of activities on the ground. However, there is a need to enhance coordination, whether it be in the field of the rule of law, the provision of assistance to survivors of sexual violence or the collection of accurate data. While we are fully aware of the challenges to data collection and reporting in the midst of fragile and often volatile post-conflict and conflict situations, we consider the collection of

accurate information in a safe, confidential environment very important, in order to ensure an adequate and coherent response of States and the United Nations system. In this respect, I also would like to underline the important role that civil society organizations play in the field and the need to involve them in the work of States and the United Nations system.

Let me highlight some concrete steps which we consider crucial to ensuring follow-up to the commitments of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008). First, the Netherlands would like to underline the responsibility of all parties to a conflict, including State agents, to protect civilians in accordance with international, humanitarian and human rights law. This implies commitment and action from civilian and military leaders to use their authority to prevent sexual crimes and to report and punish all perpetrators who commit these crimes. In this context, we consider the vetting of armed and security forces, joint patrols to protect civilians, a duty to investigate for commanders, and enforceable codes of conducts to be measures that could significantly strengthen prevention policies.

Secondly, we welcome the efforts of the United Nations system to ensure that peace negotiations and agreements contribute to preventing and responding to sexual violence. We would strongly encourage increasing efforts in this regard. We also would like to stress the role the Council and the Secretariat can play in ensuring the explicit integration of commitments made in resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) into the mandates of United Nations appointed mediators, special envoys and special representatives, and in monitoring the implementation of these commitments.

Let me now briefly address some of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report.

We welcome the recommendation that the Council establish a commission of inquiry to investigate and report on violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. We also welcome the recommendation to ensure that the Security Council Expert Group on the Protection of Civilians and the sanctions Committees be duly mandated to address sexual violence.

In this respect, we consider the recent adoption of resolution 1882 (2009) to be a crucial step forward, as it ensures that the killing and maiming of children and rape and other sexual violence perpetrated against children in situations of armed conflict, are integrated into the monitoring activities of the Councils' Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

In addition, we look forward to receiving the Secretary-General's proposal for an appropriate mechanism or procedure to consider and act on information concerning measures taken by parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations and to prosecute perpetrators of sexual violence.

Finally, we take note of the Secretary-General's consideration of the advisability of the appointment of a senior person with responsibility to attend to the prevention of and response to sexual violence across the United Nations system. Indeed, there is a need for structural attention on this issue. The prevention of and response to sexual violence should be an integral part of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. In this respect, we would like to underline the importance of a positive decision by Member States in September to establish a strong, coordinated and coherent United Nations gender entity headed by an under-secretary-general.

Let me conclude by calling upon all Security Council members to adopt a strong, action-oriented resolution that will contribute to a coordinated, systematic and coherent international response to these heinous crimes.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mr. Leroy (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union and thanks the Secretary-General for his report (S/2009/362) on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008).

A year ago, the Security Council took an important step in fighting sexual violence by adopting resolution 1820 (2008). Belgium believes that, today, it is urgent to take our efforts to the next level. The situation on the ground seems to be far from improving, and the international community's interventions are still too few and far between.

Our goal should be to act proactively rather than to react after the fact, when it is already too late for the tens of thousands of women and children victims of these crimes. To that end, we must, as a matter of priority, put in place a comprehensive plan of action

that aims not only at ending this intolerable violence when it takes place, but also and above all at strengthening once and for all the capacity of States to prevent such violence in the future. Only the strengthening of national capacities can enable States to shoulder their own responsibility to prevent such crimes.

In this respect, the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo should serve as a warning and an example. While today we can talk about a genuine human disaster in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in particular in the region of the Kivus, the recent adoption by the United Nations of a comprehensive strategy to combat sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo represents a glimmer of hope for the future. Belgium will do its utmost to ensure that the international community musters the resolve necessary for the strategy to bear fruit.

The Secretary-General's report offers many interesting options for the future, and Belgium would like to address several of these in particular.

We cannot emphasize strongly enough the importance of combating impunity for sexual crimes. Impunity is not only fertile ground upon which violence develops and recurs, but it also undermines the foundation of any reconstruction and redevelopment effort. As the jurisprudence of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda have shown, international criminal courts have an important role to play in combating sexual crimes. Belgium warmly welcomes the appointment of a special adviser for gender issues by the International Criminal Court.

International prosecution, however, is not enough. On the contrary, we must increase initiatives to strengthen the rule of law, judicial institutions and penal systems in countries that have the greatest need of such in order to enable them to dispense justice at the local level. These countries must be in a position to dispense impartial justice and to prosecute all perpetrators, even when they are agents of the State.

Last week, we learned of the conviction by the North Kivu military court of three officers of the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for crimes against humanity, including the rape of several young girls. Such examples should be encouraged and become the rule.

Punishing the perpetrators of sexual crimes is one thing, but assisting victims is another. Fighting impunity should be accompanied by programmes to address the individual and societal consequences of these crimes over the short, medium and long terms. The work done by the Peacebuilding Commission in its country-specific configuration for the Central African Republic is a good example of the integration of gender and sexual violence issues into a reconstruction programme. Such efforts should become widespread.

In that respect, Belgium appreciates the Secretary-General's idea of appointing a senior person responsible for the United Nations response to the issue of sexual violence. However, we believe that more should be done, and we call for the appointment of a female mediator for women, peace and security. The role of this mediator would be to ensure that women are systematically involved in peace negotiation processes and that a gender-based approach, including the issue of sexual violence, is taken into account in all United Nations peacekeeping and reconstruction activities.

In order to fight the scourge of sexual violence in the most effective way possible, our Organization also needs to guarantee the quality of the information at its disposal. Belgium supports the Secretary-General's proposal to improve the collection and coordination of data by involving all actors not only in the field, but also in Geneva and New York. Belgium also supports the creation of a follow-up mechanism within the Security Council so as to make the most of this information.

This week's adoption of resolution 1882 (2009), whereby sexual violence will be considered as a trigger for the Council's follow-up mechanism on children and armed conflict, is a step in that direction, and Belgium welcomes it.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Touray (Sierra Leone): Let me start by expressing my satisfaction and gratitude for the opportunity to participate in this open debate on the use of sexual violence in armed conflict and its aftermath

I also wish to sincerely congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August and to wish you a

successful tenure. I extend my thanks and appreciation to the members of the Council for having unanimously adopted resolution 1820 (2008), which mandated the submission of the report we are discussing today, as well as its precursor, resolution 1325 (2000).

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his very informative and enlightened report (S/2009/362) and to express my delegation's full support for it and its consequential recommendations to the Council. In addition, I would be remiss if I failed to commend the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; United Nations special agencies, funds and programmes, including United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict; and all other stakeholders whose concerted efforts contributed to the production of the report.

The Secretary-General, in the report under review, emphasizes the need for the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) in the context of situations that are on the agenda of the Council, including the situation in Sierra Leone. He also describes key challenges that remain and the need to address them as a matter of urgency if progress is to be made in containing sexual violence. He also outlines the responsibilities of States and other parties in relation to sexual violence in conflict and its aftermath, as well as the efforts of the United Nations to prevent and respond to sexual violence.

Sierra Leone experienced one of the fiercest and bloodiest conflicts of the 1990s, involving mass killings; the maiming, hacking and amputation of limbs; the targeting and terrorizing of civilians as a tactic and instrument of war; the plundering and pillaging of their property; and the subjection of our women to horrendous and despicable violations of their human rights, including but not limited to rape, abduction, gang rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage and even forced labour and conscription.

However, with the help of the international community, our bilateral partners and regional and subregional organizations, the country is moving comparatively swiftly towards stability and peace. That is not to say, however, that the relics of the past are gone and done with, for traces of the past — although not many — remain with us in the aftermath of the war, and gender-based violence within domestic settings is not uncommon.

Much has been accomplished in my country through measures taken to prevent sexual violence and protect civilians, to combat impunity for sexual violence, to address discrimination against our women and girls, and to provide assistance, remedies and reparation for victims of sexual violence.

As a State party to relevant international human rights instruments, we are quite conscious of our obligations, under international law, international humanitarian law and pertinent resolutions of this body, to protect our women and girls from all forms of violence, to punish the perpetrators and to provide reparation for the victims. In that regard, Sierra Leone has shown genuine political will and commitment towards meeting the needs and interests of women and girls and has taken appropriate measures to address gender-based violence, including the following.

First, the Lomé Peace Agreement, which brought an end to the hostilities and paved the way for peace, was a major effort to ensure that the negotiations and their outcome would contribute to preventing or responding to sexual violence. It emphasized special attention to the needs of women and the importance of their inclusion in strategic decision-making positions so that they can play a central role in the country's reconstruction process.

Second, the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission highlighted the pathetic plight of women during the conflict. It recommended 30 per cent representation for women in the decision-making process, as well as reparations for victims of sexual violence.

Third, the Special Court for Sierra Leone was established to demonstrate that there can be no impunity for those who have committed acts against women and to address the heinous crimes — especially sexual violence against women — committed during the war, irrespective of assurances of amnesty for the perpetrators.

Fourth, three gender acts, aimed at reinforcing women's rights and clamping down on sexual and domestic violence, were adopted. The gender acts modernized the law against rape, including marital rape; criminalized domestic violence; and provided protection for victims, especially women in rural areas. Wife-beating is now a criminal offence, women can now own property, and the idea of forcing young girls into marriage is gradually becoming a thing of the past.

Fifth, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, a core international human rights instrument on discrimination against women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child have been ratified.

Sixth, we have endorsed and implemented relevant resolutions such as resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), including through the establishment, in all our district police headquarters, of family support units mandated specifically to deal with gender-based violence. Although poorly resourced and understaffed, they are in high demand.

Seventh, a national policy on the enhancement of women through gender mainstreaming was adopted in 2001.

Eighth, a Gender Ministry — although also poorly resourced — has been established.

Ninth, a national committee was established in 2008 by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, bringing together all agencies working on gender-based violence, including UNICEF; the Rainbow Clinic Centre, a counselling and treatment clinic for raped and battered women; and other non-governmental organizations to ensure proper coordination. Since its establishment, the committee has been very effective in facilitating referrals to police, legal and medical practitioners, counsellors and trained health workers for the assessment and prosecution of cases of sexual violence.

Tenth, structures have been put in place for the provision of remedies and reparation for victims of sexual violence. The process of identification, enlisting and registration is currently ongoing.

Eleventh, an affirmative action programme has been adopted for the education of girls. It seeks to empower our women and girls so as to transform them into effective partners in addressing discriminatory practices; to increase their participation in decision-making, conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes; and to improve their status in society.

Twelfth, the Human Rights Commission has been established to report on, monitor and address human rights issues and violations.

Thirteenth, the Constitutional Review Commission of Sierra Leone has been established and tasked to consider discriminatory provisions in the Constitution, particularly those discriminating against women and on the basis of gender.

Finally, gender-sensitive enlistment for the security sector, police, army and prison staff has been made a matter of Government policy.

Laudable though these achievements may sound, there is a need for more political space to articulate the aspirations of women and to contain sexual violence in all its ramifications, particularly within the context of the cultural dimensions of issues affecting women and changing culturally ingrained practices.

Barely seven years after the end of the civil war in Sierra Leone and almost 10 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), there is still a need for more action to improve our performance on matters of gender-based violence. Adequate performance is constrained largely by a lack of much-needed resources rather than a lack of political will. We still need the continued support and assistance of the international community to help us fully implement the provisions of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

More is still needed in the sphere of international assistance and support to States, particularly fragile ones like ours that are emerging from conflict, to enable them to fulfil all of the obligations imposed by these resolutions in terms of the prevention of and response to gender-based violence.

Furthermore, from an international point of view, it is important that the prevention of and response to sexual violence be clearly and specifically reflected in peacekeeping mandates and mission directives and that personnel selected for peacekeeping operations and units be skilled in dealing with sexual violence. There is also a paramount need to improve the collection of data on sexual violence and to ensure accountability.

There are many hands on deck. The United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UNICEF and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs are all involved in the process in their own special way, and there are also senior-level mission focal points made up of Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, humanitarian coordinators and resident coordinators. As the saying goes, too many cooks spoil

the broth, and the need for effective coordination is ever present.

The Sierra Leone delegation accordingly supports the call for the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General for women and peace and security, a call that was made most recently during the March 2009 International Colloquium for Women's Empowerment, Leadership Development, Peace and Security, organized by the Presidents of our sister Republic of Liberia and Finland. This would drive the coordination of the system-wide response to sexual violence in armed conflict, especially in the areas of humanitarian assistance, data collection and reporting on sexual violence and information management. This, in the view of my delegation, would not only reinforce the United Nations multisectoral response to gender-based violence, but would immensely help to address the existing gaps in it. It could further assist and give direction to the understanding of the problem and the adoption of effective strategies in strengthening the United Nations role on gender-based violence, data collection and other related matters.

I cannot conclude my statement without taking this opportunity to thank the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone, a creation of both the Security Council and the General Assembly that was introduced in our peacebuilding architecture, for its leadership role in ensuring that the incidents that took place in Freetown on 13 and 16 March did not escalate to the point of disrupting the hard-earned peace that we have all tirelessly worked to sustain. I must also commend the recent intervention by UNIFEM to facilitate the provision of victim- and witness-protection services for the ongoing Justice Bankole Thompson Commission of Inquiry, established by His Excellency President Ernest Bai Koroma to investigate the allegations of rape and sexual violence that occurred during the political clashes in March this year.

The Secretary-General states in his report that

> "when it comes to sexual violence, we cannot expect peace without justice, reparation without recognition, and sustainable development without the full empowerment of those who have suffered sexual violence or are at risk". (*S/2009/362, para. 58*)

That could not be truer of the situation in Sierra Leone.

Finally, the Security Council's leadership in controlling sexual violence has been invaluable and praiseworthy. Its continual leadership is a must if significant progress is to be sustained in this venture.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Iceland.

Mr. Jónasson (Iceland): Allow me at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate and to thank the Secretary-General for his thorough report (S/2009/362). Iceland subscribes to the recommendations put forward by the Secretary-General in his report as to how to better implement resolution 1820 (2008).

The international community has a responsibility to protect civilians from the widespread and systematic use of sexual violence as a tactic of war. While States bear the primary responsibility, the international community also has an obligation to assist those States that are not able to fulfil that responsibility.

To tackle the deliberate use of sexual violence, it is essential to understand the nature and scope of the problem. An effective monitoring and reporting mechanism is pivotal to ensuring the successful implementation of resolution 1820 (2008). Useful synergies could be established between the monitoring and accountability mechanisms established under resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1820 (2008).

Furthermore, efforts to address sexual violence, as set out in resolution 1820 (2008), would benefit from increased cooperation among the United Nations actors involved in peacekeeping, development and human rights, including gender equality and the status of women. By promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in national and international development policies, as well as in peace processes as set out in resolution 1325 (2000), the international community can effectively reduce the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war.

The United Nations must lead by example. United Nations peacekeepers must receive proper training. They must not betray the trust we have placed in them by perpetrating acts of wanton violence. Troop-contributing countries must adopt appropriate measures.

Finally, as long as impunity for sexual violence continues, these crimes will be difficult to suppress. To effectively end impunity, a broad range of actions is

needed. At the national level, urgent legal and judicial system reforms are required to punish perpetrators. This will require active cooperation and assistance from the international community. Moreover, the Security Council should use all the measures at its disposal, especially when it comes to persistent violators. We encourage the Council to ensure that sexual violence offences are addressed in the work of its sanctions committees and to use its most effective tools, including targeted sanctions, as appropriate, for such crimes.

In conclusion, my delegation would welcome annual reports by the Secretary-General on the progress and implementation of resolution 1820 (2008).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan): First, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of August and to thank you for convening the debate on this crucial topic. I would also like to welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/362) on sexual violence in situations of armed conflict, which reflects both the appalling scope and the devastating effects of this issue.

Afghanistan remains fully dedicated to the implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) on the rights of women in conflict situations. It has become clear that the lack of a stable, secure State often leads to persistent violations of human rights, particularly women's rights. Insecurity allows extremism to flourish and makes it extremely difficult for Governments and international organizations to provide even basic services to their citizens. The lack of resources and capacity limits the ability of Governments to effectively enforce protective legislative and judicial mechanisms. Without the equal involvement of half of our populations in our civil societies, economies and political systems, our nations are deeply incapacitated and our children, economies and even the stability of our countries suffer.

Only eight years ago, under the brutal Taliban regime, Afghanistan had no provisions for the protection of women and human rights, but, despite ongoing difficulties, we have made significant progress, particularly in education and health care. Women's issues are taken into account at each stage of the national stabilization process and in national strategies, such as the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. Afghanistan has the legal and judicial mechanisms in place to achieve success. We are also party to the relevant international mechanisms, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. However, the ongoing support of the international community for Afghan efforts is absolutely necessary, both to encourage our citizens' bottom-up efforts towards success and to sustain the Government's top-down labours. We have emerged from the darkness of a long national nightmare, but we still have more work to do.

Over the past 30 years, Afghans have experienced violence on an almost unprecedented scale. Persistent poverty and other symptoms of conflict have disproportionately affected women, and for the first time in the 1990s, during a bloody internecine war, physical and psychological violence was accompanied by horrendous acts of sexual abuse.

The scars of those abuses continue to be seen and felt today. Women in Afghanistan still face not just sexual violence, but sexual discrimination and oppression, caused and exacerbated by enduring insecurity and the terrorist activities of the Taliban and Al-Qaida. In some particularly unstable parts of the country where the Taliban is still active or where the rule of a law is not yet strong, women attempting to work or hold office face abuse, threats and physical attacks. Other women have their rights curtailed and are forced into marriage and other exploitative situations. Even in areas free of the Taliban threat, a creeping Talibanization promotes an un-Islamic, un-Afghan culture that denies women's basic rights.

Afghanistan supports the Secretary-General's analysis that a central step towards preventing violence against women is to combat gender discrimination and to give women a larger role in political and decision-making processes. Afghanistan's experience shows that there are no better advocates for women's rights than women themselves, and so we must do everything we can to help them be heard.

In the upcoming presidential and provincial elections, the participation of women will be crucial to success in Afghanistan. We have had some praiseworthy victories. Millions of women have registered to vote, and educational programmes run by the Government, the United Nations Population Fund

and the United Nations Mission of Assistance in Afghanistan educate women about the voting process and their rights and opportunities as citizens. Our Constitution guarantees women at least 25 per cent of the seats in provincial councils and 27 per cent of the seats in Parliament, and women have served as governors and in the Cabinet. A growing number of women have registered as candidates; a record-breaking 328 women are running for provincial councils and two women are among the presidential candidates.

Nonetheless, even if governmental mechanisms are in place to ensure equality, women are silenced within a culture of shame and, worse still, do not demand their rights owing to a lack of awareness or support. My Government will continue to enlist cultural, political and religious leaders in encouraging a proper understanding of women's Islamic and political rights, and to explicitly and publicly condemn all violence against women and girls. Impunity only reinforces patterns of violence.

Afghan women need the support and protection of the United Nations, the international community and the Government of Afghanistan as they work to transform society. The role of the United Nations and the international community in that struggle should be to support the Government of Afghanistan with resources, knowledge and capacity-building. Led by this Council, we should also encourage a moral and legal awareness of women's rights, both locally and in multilateral forums, and keep the issue of violence against women at the top of the international agenda. With that support, we can work to strengthen judicial mechanisms and decrease reliance on local, ad hoc justice systems that frequently disadvantage women. We can increase the number of women in the Afghan National Police and have more units dedicated to domestic violence. We can also do more to combat extremism and educate the public about the rights of women by publicizing and enforcing international and Islamic human rights norms.

The women of Afghanistan continue to suffer from violence. However, social transformation, like political stabilization and economic development, is a gradual process that requires security and continuity. We have learned that the surest way to improve the situation of women is to provide them with education, protection and support and to give them a platform from which to speak for themselves. My Government remains fully committed to that cause.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Mr. Chávez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome the initiative to hold an open debate on resolution 1820 (2008) and the role of women and peace and security. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for presenting his report (S/2009/362), and welcome the statements made this morning.

As the Secretary-General points out, sexual violence is deeply dehumanizing, inflicts serious physical and psychological wounds, is accompanied by fear, shame and stigmatization, and is often a method of torture. Women and girls have been particularly vulnerable to such violence in the armed conflicts that have occurred throughout history, although they are not the only victims. That is why resolution 1820 (2008) represents an important step forward at the normative and operational levels in firmly condemning all forms of sexual violence against civilians in armed conflict and in adopting measures aimed at its elimination.

Moreover, this debate is particularly relevant as it is taking place a few days after the Security Council took a step forward in protecting children in armed conflict by adopting resolution 1882 (2009), co-sponsored by my country, which extends the criteria whereby parties to a conflict may be included in the reports that the Secretary-General must periodically submit to the Security Council on that matter. Resolution 1882 (2009) includes sexual violence among those criteria. My delegation therefore believes that it is important that Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008) and 1882 (2009) be mutually reinforcing in preventing and combating sexual violence against women and children in conflict situations.

Due implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) undoubtedly calls for prevention measures and resolute actions to combat impunity, effective mechanisms of assistance to victims and the greater empowerment of women, making them part of conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. It also continues to be a priority to include gender perspective in issues related to peace and security. There we see the complementarity of implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

Peru also believes that, as the Secretary-General stresses in his report, it is fundamentally important that resolutions adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, whether to establish or renew mandates or to impose sanctions, contain provisions to prevent and respond to acts of sexual violence. Furthermore, peacekeeping operations should have clear mandates for attaining this objective.

I welcome the progress made by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in formulating guidelines to facilitate implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). Also valuable are studies of peacekeeping best practices to combat sexual violence that the DPKO is carrying out together with the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict. It is important that during the early recovery and peacebuilding phases efforts continue in this area. It is critical to continue support for the endeavours of the Peacebuilding Commission and the work of the United Nations Development Programme in the field.

Without socio-economic opportunity for victims of sexual violence, we cannot hope for lasting peace. Nor is lasting peace possible without the rule of law or access to justice. For that reason, the fight against impunity is fundamental to the eradication of sexual violence.

One key element in addressing this question is the availability of complete information on instances of sexual violence in armed conflict. As indicated by the Secretary-General, many cases are known through ad hoc tribunals, transitional justice mechanisms and other special mechanisms, although only scattered information exists on this topic. Thus, it is necessary to look into mechanisms to enable the United Nations agencies, the various committees of the Security Council and the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict to exchange reliable information on acts of sexual violence, with a view to taking measures to reduce and combat this scourge. My delegation also believes that it is important to consider the Secretary-General's request to establish a Security Council follow-up mechanism regarding measures taken by parties involved in conflict so as to comply with their international obligations to prevent and combat sexual violence.

We note with satisfaction that the international community is making efforts to move forward on the protection of civilians, especially women and children in armed conflict and in post-conflict situations. Resolution 1820 (2008) and other resolutions reflect shared values and the unanimous condemnation of sexual violence against civilians in armed conflict. It is only through concerted efforts and political will that it will be possible to create a safe and sustainable environment for peacebuilding processes.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Santos (Timor-Leste): Let me begin, Mr. President, by expressing Timor-Leste's appreciation to you for convening this open debate on the report of Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) (S/2009/362).

My country, Timor-Leste, believes it has a moral obligation to speak out on this issue. Timorese women lived through the worst and went through extreme violence during our conflict. Our women have seen it all. We hope we can honour them by helping to make the lives of all women in all conflict settings more secure and dignified.

Timor-Leste is of opinion that the Secretary-General's in-depth report on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) is a good and comprehensive report and an important tool for reducing the use of sexual violence against women. It provides critical information on conflict situations in which sexual violence is widely or systematically employed against civilians and offers a number of good recommendations aimed at minimizing the susceptibility of women and girls to such violence.

Unfortunately, and despite repeated condemnation, as noted in the Secretary-General's report, violence and sexual abuse of women and children trapped in war zones is not only continuing, but, in some cases, has become so widespread and systematic as to reach appalling levels of brutality and inhumanity. More than ever, we need to move from words to action. We need to make sure that implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) results in real change on the ground for women and girls at risk of sexual violence.

The report should be seen as a landmark opportunity and a basis on which to build implementation. In this regard, Timor-Leste calls on the Security Council to consider full and effective

implementation of the report's recommendations and to consistently and substantively address the particular concerns of women in conflict-affected situations.

Timor-Leste hopes that the Council will specifically consider the appointment of a special representative or special envoy for women and peace and security. Such a person would drive coordination of the system-wide efforts to respond to and prevent sexual violence in armed conflict, promote action and enhance effectiveness on the ground, and would reinforce, support and help drive existing United Nations efforts.

The Council should also establish a commission of inquiry, supported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the task of investigating and reporting sexual violence in Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan, and of making recommendations to the Council on the most effective mechanisms for ensuring accountability. In addition, we also recommend that the Council establish such commissions in future conflicts where sexual violence is prevalent.

The Council should request analysis of sexual violence issues in all country-specific reports and ensure that resolutions that establish or renew peacekeeping mandates or political missions contain provisions on the prevention of, and response to, sexual violence, as well as corresponding reporting requirements.

The Security Council should emphasize the need for more systematic and effective data collection and reporting on sexual violence. Prevention, protection and prosecution cannot occur without information and analysis.

The Council should request that the Department of Political Affairs ensure that sexual violence dimensions are considered in all mediation processes in which the United Nations is involved.

The Council should call on troop contributors to strengthen pre-deployment training on ways to address sexual violence and request that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations include this subject matter in training advice to troop-contributing countries.

The international community has a special responsibility to advance efforts to deal with sexual violence in conflict settings. However, Timor-Leste would like to highlight that Member States are individually responsible for dealing with this issue. A number of States have inadequate internal measures to prevent sexual violence and protect civilians, combat impunity for sexual violence, address continuing discrimination against women and girls in law and in practice, and provide proper and dignified assistance to victims.

Let me conclude by saying that my country is well aware that a number of these recommendations involve important budgetary implications. However, let me recall that women and girls are suffering. We have the responsibility to protect them and to take real and effective measures to put an end to their suffering, as the Secretary-General stated early this morning, to set our world on a course for a better future.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Mahiga (Tanzania): Mr. President, we thank you for organizing this important Security Council debate on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008), on sexual violence against women, during the presidency of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. We commend the Secretary-General's report on this matter (S/2009/362), which advances our understanding of the subject of sexual violence against women, especially in situations of armed conflict and post-armed conflict situations, and the measures which need to be taken to preventing and address violence against girls and women.

We appreciate and encourage the leadership of the Secretary-General and the Security Council on this subject, which needs to be linked normatively and operationally to resolution 1325 (2000), on women and armed conflict. Both resolutions are central to international peace and security. They have generated significant positive responses from States and regional and international organizations, which have become engaged in addressing gender-based violence in conflict and non-conflict situations alike.

In Tanzania, we are working with the United Nations system — especially the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) — on advocacy initiatives, as well as promoting legislative and policy measures to address and mainstream national initiatives against gender-based violence. Tanzania has agreed with UNIFEM to lead a regional initiative related to the campaign against gender-based

violence, including sexual violence against girls and women.

I also take this opportunity to draw the attention of the Council and the United Nations system to the newly launched African Union gender policy, which is related to, among other issues, the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). We encourage the Council and the United Nations system as a whole to cooperate and coordinate with the African Union on initiatives in these areas, as appropriate. This could be a subject of future discussions in the evolving partnership and cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union.

There are many challenges in the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) at all levels. Among those that stand out and require urgent responses at all levels is the collection of adequate and reliable information on sexual violence. That can best be done through the provision of assured access to humanitarian assistance for survivors of violence. Information would not only give us a better understanding of the problem, but also allow us to devise appropriate strategies to address the problem and help the victims of sexual violence. In peacekeeping missions and other humanitarian operations, access to survivors of sexual violence must be given due priority.

Coordinated action within the United Nations through a focal point in the Secretariat needs to be part of the wider initiative of the gender entity in the United Nations system-wide coherence exercise. This ought to go hand in hand with developing expertise on gender-based violence within United Nations agencies in the humanitarian sector. We commend the individual agencies, funds and programmes that already have dedicated units to deal with gender-based violence, but their mandates would be greatly enhanced through a system-wide focal point.

While the Security Council, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs continue to improve the protection of civilians in peacekeeping missions, preventing and protecting against sexual violence remain a relatively new and still evolving undertaking. We therefore encourage troop-contributing countries, in partnership with DPKO, to develop specific training for peacekeepers in the protection of women and girls against sexual violence before their deployment to peacekeeping missions. That would entail increasing the numbers of female military and police officers, as well as of trained civilian female staff, to be deployed in the field.

We look forward to participating in a wider debate in the Council later this year on the protection of civilians in peacekeeping operations.

The President: I now call on the representative of Kenya.

Mrs. Cerere (Kenya): I should like at the outset to join other delegations in thanking you, Mr. President, for organizing this very timely debate on women and peace and security. My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/362) pursuant to resolution 1820 (2008). Today's debate is timely, as it comes at a time when we are being confronted with persistent, widespread and systematic cases of sexual violence perpetrated against civilians in conflict and non-conflict situations.

My delegation concurs with the Secretary-General's report that sexual violence constitutes one of the most serious violations of international humanitarian, human rights and criminal law. Women and girls make up a disproportionate percentage of the victims of sexual violence. We must find the means to hold accountable all perpetrators of this atrocity and to provide justice to the victims. To that end, States should endeavour to strengthen their domestic capacities to protect vulnerable groups and to investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators.

The effective implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) will require Governments, the private sector, civil society and the United Nations system to reaffirm their commitments and address the most urgent challenges and obstacles to mainstreaming a gender perspective into the area of international peace and security. There is a need for States to ratify and implement core international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The appalling situation regarding sexual violence perpetrated against women and girls in conflict situations, especially in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa, has to be looked at seriously. As a community of States, we must rigorously implement the United Nations policy of zero tolerance with regard to the sexual abuse and exploitation of women and girls by staff and related personnel.

We must also provide protection to women and ensure that putting a stop to war-related sexual violence is prioritized at the international level. We laud the crucial work being carried out by United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Population Fund, UNICEF and others in dealing with these issues. Similarly, we need to galvanize support for putting in place the infrastructure necessary to ensure that victims of sexual violence receive quality medical assistance.

In addition, during the post-conflict reconstruction and healing process, decisions should not be made for women; women must be part and parcel of the process that affects them.

Kenya appreciates the great strides made by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in promoting gender balance among peacekeeping personnel. The incorporation of full-time gender advisers into peacekeeping missions has been very useful in that regard. Although gender balance is far from having been attained, we have taken steps in the right direction. DPKO needs to redouble its efforts to achieve that goal. It must develop and disseminate to States — especially troop-contributing countries — effective guidelines to ensure sustained efforts in gender mainstreaming at all levels of peacekeeping operations.

Kenya has embarked on a vigorous process aimed at improving its institutional capacity to hold to account all perpetrators of crimes against human rights, including sexual violence, by initiating reforms of its law enforcement and justice administration agencies. In addition, Kenya has made deliberate efforts to increase the participation of women in peacekeeping operations. Currently, we have women in uniform in all missions in which we are engaged. The adoption of the Sexual Offences Act has facilitated a more effective means of dealing with sexual offences, including rape. This has been augmented through the establishment of gender desks at police stations to deal specifically with violations relating to violence against women.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate our condemnation of sexual violence against women and to urge all Member States, civil society and the United Nations system, particularly the Security Council and the International Criminal Court, to put an end to impunity in that regard. We support more concrete and substantive measures to stem this vice. Perpetrators must be held accountable for their nefarious deeds through the actualization of a zero-tolerance policy concerning sexual abuse and exploitation.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency for the month of August. My delegation welcomes this opportunity to participate in this open debate on women and peace and security, and wishes to express our sincere appreciation to the delegation of the United Kingdom for convening this debate. We also thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2009/362) on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) and for its presentation this morning.

The genocide in Rwanda in 1994 witnessed some of the most inhumane acts of violence targeted against women and girls. As the Secretary-General's report correctly points out,

> "for the first time in 1994, in the circumstances of the case, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) qualified the crime of rape as a form of genocide" (*S/2009/362, para. 6*).

The survivors of the genocide continue to live with the consequences of these crimes 15 years on, with very little or no specific assistance from the international community. The perpetrators of these heinous crimes, the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), have been central to regional insecurity in the Great Lakes region since 1994 and continue to pose a threat to ongoing peace efforts. I would urge the international community to complement the efforts of the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to eliminate the threat posed by the FDLR and to assist the survivors.

It is imperative that the culture of impunity that has allowed for the continued perpetration of systematic sexual violence in the Great Lakes region and elsewhere be uprooted once and for all. My Government, in collaboration with our Parliament, has continued to strengthen the capacity of both the police and the judiciary to effectively respond to any incident of sexual violence. In this respect, we welcome the recommendations set out in the Secretary-General's report to tackle impunity, and particularly concerning

the need for the United Nations system to deliver as one to address sexual violence in all its forms.

The equal participation of women and men in the promotion of peace and security in conflict and post-conflict situations alike is integral to any peacekeeping, peacemaking or peacebuilding process. It is within this context that my Government has set out to ensure that women are central to the political, economic and social governance of our nation. Equally, the participation of women in the maintenance of and promotion of peace is essential, and Rwanda has placed the prevention of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict at the core of its peacekeeping commitments. Sexual violence against women and girls is considered by the Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF) as a key component of the security threat in all its deployments. In this respect, the Gender Desk at Rwandan Defence Headquarters devises training programmes with the support of the United Nations Development Fund for Women and other United Nations agencies to raise awareness of gender-based violence and violence against women in the armed forces.

Awareness and training on responding to gender-based violence and violence against women have now been mainstreamed into the curriculum of all Rwanda's military schools and training institutions, and is integral to the preparation of all RDF battalions for peacekeeping missions abroad. The participation of Rwandan policewomen in peacekeeping missions in the Sudan has further ensured that they raise awareness among the population in support of their missions. We would urge the United Nations system to strengthen and maintain its support to Member States in this respect.

My Government remains firmly committed to the joint implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) and will continue to play its role at the national, subregional, regional and global levels to ensure that the scourge of sexual violence is eliminated.

The President: I would like to say that we have heard today many valuable and thought-provoking views and suggestions on this subject of very grave concern. All of these helpful contributions will inform the work of the Council as it prepares a formal response to the Secretary-General's report over the next few weeks.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.

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Official communiqué of the 6181st (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 13 August 2009, at 10 a.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"On 13 August 2009, the Security Council, pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B, held its 6181st meeting in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

"The Security Council and the troop-contributing countries heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. Edmond Mulet, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

"Members of the Council, Mr. Mulet and representatives of participating troop-contributing countries had an exchange of views."

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United Nations S/PV.6182

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6182nd meeting

Wednesday, 19 August 2009, 11 a.m.

New York

President:	Sir John Sawers	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Ebner
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Japan	Mr. Okuda
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Turkey	Mr. Çorman
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

09-48663 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of United Nations personnel

The President: Before we start, I should just like to recall that many of us were present at this morning's commemoration of the sixth anniversary of the Canal Hotel bombing in Baghdad, in which Special Representative Sergio Vieira de Mello and 21 other colleagues of ours from the United Nations were killed. I believe it is appropriate that we bear in mind this sombre anniversary as a backdrop for our important work today.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Fernandez-Taranco: Since my last briefing and the open debate on 27 July on the situation in the Middle East (see S/PV.6171), there have been several important developments on the ground and continued international efforts to create the conditions for the prompt resumption and early conclusion of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. United States Envoy Mitchell completed a regional visit on 29 July to seek commitments and actions from the parties, including with regard to the implementation of phase I Road Map obligations, as well as on broader regional steps, as outlined by the Quartet in its Trieste statement of 26 June. The Quartet envoys met in the office of the Special Coordinator in Jerusalem on 31 July in a follow-up to the principals' meeting in Trieste, and are expected to meet again soon.

During September, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee and Quartet principals are expected to meet on the margins of the general debate. The principals will also consult with the members of the League of Arab States Follow-Up Committee on the Arab Peace Initiative. The Secretary-General looks forward to those meetings as important benchmarks for progress in the renewed effort by the international community this year to achieve genuine forward movement on the political, security and economic tracks.

In the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority continues its efforts to impose law and order in Palestinian cities and towns. Since mid-June there has been a notable decrease in the number of Palestinians injured by Israeli military activities, and we hope this welcome trend will continue. Attacks by Israeli settlers on Palestinians and their property continued, along with a lack of enforcement of the rule of law. Altogether, 24 Palestinians, of whom five were children, and seven Israelis, all adults, were injured. There were no fatalities to report.

In last month's briefing, we reported that Israel had eased some movement restrictions, improving access to certain West Bank towns and aiding efforts to improve living conditions and promote economic growth. According to the Nablus Chamber of Commerce, that city has seen a slow, albeit significant, revival of commercial activity since the beginning of the year. In addition, the Government of Israel announced that, as of 5 August, passenger crossing hours at Allenby Bridge will be expanded on a pilot basis, which we hope will ease the flow of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who visit the West Bank. This measure follows an earlier announcement of the expansion of commercial crossing hours, an important step for facilitating Palestinian exports.

We welcome these actions and the statement of the Government of Israel that it intends to take further steps to ease movement and access. This is essential if change is to become truly transformative, because significant obstacles to movement and access persist in the West Bank, including around East Jerusalem; the total number of obstacles stands at 614. Other measures that would greatly enhance economic

development in the West Bank include further removal of obstacles; removal of the permit requirement for Palestinians to travel into the Jordan Valley; significantly improved access to East Jerusalem; an increased number of permits for Palestinian workers in Israel; and increased capacity of commercial crossings and redeployment of Palestinian customs authorities to Allenby Bridge. The easing of the tight restrictions on infrastructure development in Area C is also critical for Palestinian economic development.

We continue to be concerned at the critical budget deficit facing the Palestinian Authority. We welcome recent transfers made by key donors, who have made significant pledges, and we encourage all donors to fulfil pledges made in Paris in December 2007 and at Sharm el-Sheikh in March of this year.

The issue of continued Israeli settlement activity in East Jerusalem and the West Bank is a matter of grave concern. We urge the Government of Israel to heed the call of the Quartet to honour its Road Map obligations and freeze all settlement activity, including natural growth, and to remove outposts erected since March 2001. Also, the barrier, which deviates significantly from the 1967 line into occupied Palestinian territory despite the statement by the International Court of Justice that this is contrary to international law, continues to restrict Palestinian access to East Jerusalem, as well as to key social services and agricultural land.

Israeli actions in support of settlers in the heart of East Jerusalem have been a matter of particular concern in the reporting period. On 2 August, following a decision by the Israeli High Court, Israeli security forces forcibly evicted nine Palestinian families, amounting to 53 people, including 20 children, from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. Under the protection of Israeli security forces, the property was handed over to a settlement organization, and Israeli settlers took over the buildings immediately after the evictions. The families evicted are now living on the sidewalk near the homes from which they were forcibly removed, and tensions in the area remain high. Settlement plans in other parts of Sheikh Jarrah have put approximately 450 other residents of the neighbourhood at risk of displacement. In addition, on 5 August, eight Palestinians were injured in clashes with Israeli forces delivering demolition orders in the Al-Bustan neighbourhood of East Jerusalem.

We reiterate our call to Israel to adhere to international law and its Road Map obligations, and to cease and reverse provocative actions such as the demolitions and evictions in East Jerusalem. We remind Israel of the Quartet's united position on this issue, and of its recent affirmation that unilateral actions cannot prejudge the outcome of negotiations and will not be recognized by the international community.

Turning to the situation in and around Gaza, there have been serious developments inside the Strip. Late last week, a radical group calling itself Jund Ansar Allah, armed with firearms, rocket-propelled grenades and explosives, took refuge inside a mosque in Rafah, declared an Islamic emirate and criticized Hamas for insufficient efforts to launch attacks against Israel and apply strict sharia law. After that group refused to respond to calls by Hamas for its surrender, on 14 August a violent confrontation ensued, in which at least 28 people were killed and more than 100 wounded, among them a number of unarmed civilians.

Both the de facto security forces in Gaza and the militant wing of Hamas were involved in acting against the group, and heightened security measures were put in place in other parts of the Gaza Strip. These events highlight concerns regarding the radicalization of certain elements in Gaza, the dangers of continued smuggling of weapons and explosives into the Strip, the absence of an appropriate legal framework for ensuring public security and order, and the need for full respect of international humanitarian law by all parties to ensure the protection of civilians.

These developments took place during a period in which there have been no casualties due to Israeli-Palestinian violence. A relative calm, enforced on the Gaza side by Hamas, prevails. However, there were two rocket and mortar attacks against Israel by militant groups in the Gaza Strip, including an attack on 9 August on the Erez crossing point while Palestinian patients were being evacuated for medical treatment in Israel.

In response, Israeli forces conducted an air raid shelling the areas of the tunnels under the Egypt-Gaza border. Israeli forces have also conducted six ground incursions during the reporting period. Since the last report to the Council, four more lives have been lost in accidents in the tunnels. Nevertheless, large-scale

smuggling continues. This, along with the closure regime, is undermining the regular economy and people's livelihoods in Gaza, as well as forces of political moderation.

Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), which calls for mechanisms to prevent illicit trafficking of arms and ammunition into Gaza and for the sustained reopening of the crossing points, is yet to be operationalized. Overall, an average of 87 trucks per day were allowed into Gaza, as compared to 78 per day in July. This is significantly higher than the 18 trucks per day in November 2008, before the start of Operation Cast Lead. However, in May 2007, prior to the imposition of the comprehensive closure regime, 475 trucks per day were entering Gaza as part of normal commerce and trade. Today, the overwhelming majority of imports are limited to food and sanitation items, with little or no entry for all other goods, including items intended for recovery.

Notwithstanding that, there were some positive developments with respect to access. On 27 July, for the first time in 10 months, Israel permitted the shipment of 100,000 litres of diesel and 40,000 litres of gasoline into Gaza for private use. On 6 August, three truckloads of cement and steel bars were allowed into Gaza for the Palestinian Water Authority's north Gaza wastewater treatment plant. While welcome, these measures are not sufficient to meet the needs of Gaza's civilian population.

Consultations are ongoing with the Israeli authorities regarding the United Nations proposal to start early recovery construction activities for schools, homes and health clinics in Gaza. We hope for and expect a clear answer on the proposal from the Israeli Government very soon. The passage of time leaves little hope of rebuilding homes, education and health facilities before winter, which is essential to begin restoring a semblance of normality to life for the civilian population. It remains unacceptable that no early recovery or reconstruction activities for the Gaza civilian population have been enabled some seven months after Operation Cast Lead. We also reiterate that the United Nations has effective measures in place to ensure the integrity of programming in Gaza.

We continue to call for the release of Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit. We express the hope that negotiations on a prisoner exchange will be pursued in good faith by both parties to facilitate his release, along with the release of a number of the more than 11,000 Palestinian prisoners being held in Israeli jails.

Following the public hearings in Gaza and Geneva that were reported on last month, the fact-finding mission led by Justice Goldstone has completed its investigations and is in the process of finalizing its report. The report is expected to be issued in early September, with presentation and discussion of the report at the Human Rights Council scheduled for 29 September.

Between 3 and 10 August, the Fatah party of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas held its sixth party congress in Bethlehem, the first in 20 years and the first in the occupied Palestinian territory. Most Fatah members from Gaza were unable to participate following prevention of their travel by Hamas, but voted by telephone. President Abbas was elected by acclamation as Fatah leader and Chairman of the party's Central Committee. Nineteen other Fatah members, 14 of whom were not members of the previous Central Committee, were elected to the new Central Committee, and a new Revolutionary Council was elected.

We continue to call for efforts to reunite Gaza and the West Bank within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority. We support Egypt in its efforts in this regard and hope that reconciliation talks are resumed again in earnest soon.

In the occupied Syrian Golan, the situation remained quiet, although Israeli settlement activity continued. During a visit to the area on 10 August, Special Coordinator Serry expressed the continued commitment of the United Nations to a comprehensive regional peace and our hope for the early resumption of negotiations between Israel and Syria.

Turning now to Lebanon, efforts to form a new Government continued since my last briefing on 27 July. Political leaders announced that they had reached an agreement on the distribution of Cabinet seats, but not yet on the names of ministers. We expect the new Government to commit to the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006).

The overall situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has remained generally quiet. The tensions in the area of Khirbat Salim and Kfar Shouba have gradually

subsided. The investigation into the 14 July incident in Khirbat Salim is ongoing. Separately, in the early hours of 17 August, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) removed the watchtower that they had earlier set up south of the Line of Withdrawal near the village of Kfar Shouba, where there had been protests and the consequent violation of the Blue Line by a group of civilians on 17 July.

The Special Coordinator, Mr. Michael Williams, and UNIFIL Force Commander, Major General Claudio Graziano, have been in constant contact with the Lebanese Armed Forces, Israeli authorities and the IDF command in order to defuse the tension caused by the incidents of recent weeks in southern Lebanon. We believe that the dismantling of the watchtower will aid this effort. Meanwhile, Israeli air violations continued on an almost daily basis during the reporting period. We look forward to the outcomes of the current consultations on the UNIFIL mandate.

In conclusion, we urge the parties to respond positively to the efforts under way to create the conditions for an early resumption and early conclusion of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, as well as to efforts to promote progress towards comprehensive regional peace. The Secretary-General remains committed to working with the parties and his international partners for an end of the occupation that began in 1967 and the establishment of a Palestinian State living side by side in peace with Israel, within secure and recognized borders, and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions, the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The President: I thank Mr. Fernandez-Taranco for his very helpful briefing. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.6183

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6183rd meeting

Thursday, 27 August 2009, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Parham	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Ebner
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. Long Zhou
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Japan	Mr. Okuda
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Puente
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	Turkey	Mr. Apakan
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United States of America	Ms. Rice
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 6 August 2009 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2009/407)

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09-49586 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Expression of welcome to the new Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations

The President: At the outset of the meeting I should like to extend, on behalf of the Council, a warm welcome to the new Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Ertuğrul Apakan. We look forward to working closely with him.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 6 August 2009 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2009/407)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Belgium, Israel, Italy, Lebanon and Spain, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Salam (Lebanon) and Ms. Shalev (Israel) took seats at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2009/431, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Belgium, Croatia, France, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. I wish to draw the attention of participants to documents S/2009/330 and S/2009/407, containing the tenth report of the Secretary-General on Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and a letter dated 6 August 2009 from the Secretary-General, respectively.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Japan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mexico, Russian Federation, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1884 (2009).

I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Ms. Shalev (Israel): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your stewardship of the Council during the month of August.

Israel welcomes the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1884 (2009) and the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for another year. That peacekeeping mission plays an important role in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). Israel commends UNIFIL on the fulfilment of its mandate in a challenging and difficult environment.

The situation in southern Lebanon remains complex. The events of the past July shed light upon a dangerous phenomenon about which Israel has been warning. A terrorist organization, Hizbullah, continues to deploy its assets and operates actively both north and south of the Litani River in clear violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and other relevant Security Council resolutions.

The region has recently witnessed serious incidents, in which multiple explosions occurred in Khirbat Salim, in southern Lebanon, on 14 July. The Secretary-General, in his letter of 6 August to the President of the Security Council, duly noted that the explosions were caused by "a large quantity of

weapons and ammunition" in an arms cache that was "actively maintained" (*S/2009/407, pp. 1-2*). As I understand it, the same was reported by officials of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in their briefings to the Council.

The Secretary-General further noted the presence of individuals belonging to Hizbullah in the vicinity of Khirbat Salim. In his own words, the Secretary-General wrote unequivocally that "This presence of unauthorized assets or weapons between the Blue Line and the Litani River constitutes a clear violation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)" (*Ibid., p. 2*). The following days witnessed further violations of resolution 1701 (2006), with the obstruction of the freedom of movement of UNIFIL and breaches of the Blue Line by Hizbullah and its supporters.

Those additional incidents are clear evidence of the active presence of Hizbullah, a terrorist organization, in southern Lebanon. This, along with the ongoing supply of arms across the penetrable Syrian-Lebanese border, constitutes an increasing threat to peace and stability in the region.

In the light of the July incidents, the renewal of the mandate of UNIFIL is an excellent opportunity for the Security Council and DPKO to further encourage UNIFIL to strengthen its good work. Such increased efforts should help ensure that the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River is "an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL" (*resolution 1701 (2006), para. 8*).

In conclusion, I wish to extend Israel's appreciation to the countries contributing troops to UNIFIL; to the Force Commander, General Graziano; to his officers and staff; and to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. They all play an important role in an increasingly challenging and difficult environment, and Israel commends their dedication.

Israel remains committed to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and looks forward to cooperating with the Security Council, with the Secretary-General, with DPKO and with UNIFIL in that regard.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Lebanon.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon): Allow me at the outset, Mr. President, to recognize your effective stewardship of the Security Council during the present month. I would also like to acknowledge the leadership shown by your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Uganda, as President of the Council in July.

In a few days it will be the third anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). In these three years the Lebanese Government has reiterated time and again its commitment to the implementation of that resolution in its entirety and to working closely with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

Today, my Government would like, first and foremost, to thank all members of the Security Council for their decision to renew UNIFIL's mandate for a further year, without amendment to its mission, its rules of engagement or its concept of operations, as per the request of my Government. I am sure that members realize how important today's decision is for all Lebanese, who have been the victims of repeated Israeli aggression since the 1978 invasion, which led to Security Council 425 (1978) and the creation of the first UNIFIL.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to praise UNIFIL for its remarkable work in close coordination and cooperation with the Lebanese army, to commend the wise leadership of General Graziano, the Force Commander, and to thank all troop-contributing countries as well as the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Three years after the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006), however, we need to acknowledge the fact that the resolution has still not been fully implemented. That is not only because Israel continues to breach the Blue Line and to violate Lebanese airspace on a daily basis, as stated by the Secretary-General in his latest report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2009/330); it is also because Israel continues to refuse to withdraw from the northern part of al-Ghajar, and because a solution has not yet been found to the issue of the Sheba'a farms and the Kafr Shuba hills, even on an interim basis, as earlier proposed by the Lebanese Government. And how can I not mention in this context the operations of Israeli spy networks, about which the Council was briefed by Mr. Michael Williams on 8 July: do they not constitute a serious violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and consequently contribute to undermining Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)?

Given all those indisputable facts, I am sure that Council members have no doubt about the identity of the party which must be held responsible for obstructing the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). More disturbing, however, is the fact that Israeli officials have recently been launching a series of alarming threats against Lebanon, which raise serious concerns about Israeli intentions. It is enough to mention here the words of Israel's Defence Minister, Ehud Barak, who said on 7 August 2009 that "Israel did not strike at Lebanon's infrastructure hard enough during the summer war of 2006" — I stress "Lebanon's infrastructure" and "did not strike ... hard enough" — and who emphasized that a future attack would have even more destructive effects on Lebanese infrastructure than the July 2006 war.

Do I need to remind members of the Council that, during its 2006 war on Lebanon — over and above the thousands of civilian casualties and the hundreds of thousands of displaced persons — as far as infrastructure is concerned, Israel destroyed 91 bridges and damaged 137 roads, five airport runways, 58 telephone exchanges and dozens of transmission centres, and 1,514 water network points and dozens of reservoirs and pumps — in addition to 929 schools, which were totally or partially destroyed or damaged? That is not to mention the bombing of the fuel oil tanks at our geothermal station, which led to the release of more than 15,000 tons of fuel oil into the Mediterranean Sea, causing the physical and chemical contamination of the Lebanese coastline, with serious implications for human health, biodiversity, fisheries and the economy of Lebanon.

What Mr. Barak is promising us is only more acts of that kind: acts which not only are in violation of the letter and the spirit of resolution 1701 (2006) but run counter to the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, let alone the rules and principles of international humanitarian law. The credibility of the Security Council requires that such threats against my country also be condemned in the strongest words.

The President: There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.